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PREPARING FOR THE PRESS,

THE WORKS

OF

THOMAS CHATTERTON;

WITH

AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY.

I thought of Chatterton, the marvellous boy!
The sleepless soul that perish'd in his pride.

WORDSWORTH.

Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene!—

SHELLEY.

WOMAN,

THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

A Poem.

BY

ROBERT MONTGOMERY,

AUTHOR OF "THE OMNIPRESENCE OF THE DEITY,"
"THE MESSIAH," &c.

Woman is the blood royal of Life.
BURNS.

LONDON:

JOHN TURRILL, 250, REGENT STREET.

1833.

LONDON:
FREDERICK SHOBERL, JUN., 4, LEICESTER STREET, LEICESTER SQUARE.

THE empire of women is not theirs because men have willed it, but because it is the will of nature. Miserable must be the age in which this empire is lost, and in which the judgments of women are counted as nothing by man.

ROUSSEAU.

M533949

INTRODUCTORY LINES.

In silent night the vision of the dead passed by—
I saw our friends all pass,—
And oh! in silent night I saw the open graves—
I saw th' immortal host!

KLOPSTOCK'S ODES.

A VISION, by eternity unveil'd,
When midnight in her trance of darkness lay,
My soul beheld.—Methought, that time and earth
Had vanish'd, while the unforgotten dead
In glory bright and bodiless appear'd:—
How deep their gaze! oh, how divine their smile!
A pensive mildness, an immortal grace,
Each semblance wore: the father had not lost
That light paternal which his living eyes,
To greet his children, loved to have express'd;
Still on the mother's placid brow was throned
A tenderness, that triumph'd o'er decay;
And perish'd babes, whose beauty dazzled time,
In the young bloom of resurrection rose,
Serenely glad, and innocently bright.

And thus, by dreams of never-dying soul,
The dead around us, with a voiceless power,
Are present, mentally distinct and known:
As though some charm, whose links are unbeheld,
The living and the dead conjoin'd; that love,
E'en in the grave, no gloomy trance might bear,
But throb immortal in the spirit's core!

Thought flies the banquet, to embrace the tomb:
And, oh! if joy-wing'd hours awhile seduce
A faithful mourner from his fond regret;
If the dull prose of daily life contract
And dry his feelings into worldly dust,
Or selfish duty,—how divinely pure
The calm of intellectual grief again!
There can creative fondness from the world
Of parted spirits all it loved evoke:
And he whose years are chronicles of woe,
From the strange earth, where few companions dwell,
Can wander where the hopes of youth repose,
And make eternity his mighty home!—

* * * * * * * *

A knell comes booming on the dismal air,
And my dark song in solemn echo rolls
To that dread music;—from this orb of time,
Another in the noon of manhood call'd
To lie and fester with unfeeling clay!—

Oh God! the terror of Thy rising frown
Mantles the universe with more than night!
Each Kingdom, like a childless Rachel, mourns;
A Power of Darkness, on the wings of death,
Hath travell'd earth with pestilential speed,
And left but havoc to declare his flight!—
How many tombs this year hath dug! what homes
Are fill'd with desolation's fearful calm!
The chairs are vacant where the forms we loved
So oft reposed,— where *still* their semblance chains
Our fix'd and fond delusion!— in the streets,
Like silent mourners in a talking crowd,
Cold mansions tenantless and still remain,
From whose glad chambers rush'd the household tones
That made sweet music to a social mind;
And many a garden, whose luxuriant green
And laurell'd bowers the sunbeams loved to grace,
In weedy ruin is decaying now:—
The hands it welcomed with rewarding bloom
Are iced by death, and ne'er can tend it more!
'T was exquisite for him, whose town-worn life
Was fever'd by the hot and fretful day,
When evening, like an angel wing, could waft
His spirit home,— to greet the tranquil cot
Again, and bid the vexing world depart.
How dear the beauty of each dawning flower,
How rich the melody of choral leaves,
To him, whose wisdom was a feeling mind!

And thou, lone sharer of a widowed lot!
Where is the language,— though a seraph hymn'd
The poetry of heaven,— to picture thee,
Wreck'd as thou art! whose life hath now become
Affection's martyrdom:— for such is love,
Doom'd to remain on desolation's rock,
And look for ever where the past lies dead!
What is the world to thy benighted soul?
A dungeon! — save that there thy children's tones
Can ring with gladness its sepulchral gloom.
Placid, and cold, and spiritually pale,
Art thou; the lustre of thy youth is dimm'd,
The verdure of thy spirit o'er! — in vain
The beaming eloquence of day attracts
Thy heart's communion with creation's joy;
Like twilight imaged on a bank of snow,
The smile that waneth o'er thy marble cheek! —

Oh! when shall trial, tears, and torture, cease?
Despair, and frenzy, and remorseless gloom,
Defiance, and the thoughts that crouch before
The bright severity of Virtue's eye,—
When shall their myst'ry lie unweaved and bare?
When shall the lips of Agony be dumb,
And the dark wail of wounded Nature hush'd?—
A tragedy of twice three thousand years
Hath almost ended: soon, perchance, may fall
A curtain whose unfolding darkness brings

Oblivion o'er a universe decay'd!
Already looks earth's final scene begun:
The elements, like human limbs unnerved,
Forego their function; seasons out of tune
Creation's harmony of change destroy;
And in their wildness of unwonted act
Reflective eyes an awful omen read,
By Nature given to prophetic man,
Of time's conclusion.—Sea and air confess
A weird excitement; through the trackless heaven's
Immensity the unheard Comet rolls!—
No vision'd eye his path may comprehend,
Nor dread imagination dream what orbs
May crumble, or what blighted planets shrink,
As on the burning Desolator sweeps,
And blazes o'er annihilated worlds!

Spoiler of hearts and empires, vanish'd Year!
Ere for eternity thy wings were spread,
Alone I listen'd to thy dark farewell.—
The moon was center'd in the cloudless heaven,
All pale as beauty on the brow of death;
And round about her, with attracted beam,
Grouped the mild stars:—the anarchy of day
Was hush'd, the turbulence of life becalm'd.
From where I stood, a vast and voiceless plain,—
A city, garmented with mellow light,

Lay visible; and, like romance in stone,
Shone gloriously serene! — all sounds were dead:
The dew-drop, stirless as a frozen tear,
Gleam'd on the verdure; not an air-tone rang;
The leaves hung tranced as the lids of sleep;
Around me Nature in devotion seem'd,
The Elements in adoration knelt,
Till all grew worship — from the heart of things
Material to the conscious soul of man! —
'T was then, sepulchral, hollow, deep, and loud,
The bell of midnight on the stillness burst,
And made the air one atmosphere of awe! —

Sublime of hours! — I thought on all the grave
Had buried since the infant year began:
What dreams, what agonies untold,
Dead as the hearts whose depth they once turmoil'd,
Lay motionless and mute! — of pomp in dust,
Of wither'd pride, of wealth from glory hurl'd,
Of lull'd ambition and appeased despair,—
Of each I dreamt; and then, in sad array,
Pale visions of the Kings of thought arose!
The wise, the wondrous, the adored, whose deaths
Enrich'd eternity with added mind,
Sleep with the patriarchs now! — and ONE how great!
For whom the costly tears of genius fell,—
The wand is broken, and the wizard gone!

Many and mighty are the stars of fame,
But his deep splendour has outdazzled all
Since Shakspeare, that unrivalled planet! rose,
Whose radiance clad the intellectual heaven.
Yes, he hath vanish'd! — but his country wears
A veil of glory, that shall garb her clime
For ever! — How we hung upon his parting hour!
And when it summon'd the transcendant Mind
From earth to heaven — the souls of myriads felt
O'ershadowed; Europe bow'd in dim eclipse,
And Kingdoms mourn'd round his imagined tomb!

Monarchs of time, and ministers of thought!
Felt in the frame of intellectual life,
As rolls the blood-tide through our breathing form,—
Where is the palace of your spirits NOW?
In what immensity are ye array'd
Imperishably pure? Was sabbath earth
In beauty but an archetype of heaven?
Your dreams, your aspirations high,
The far-off shadows of each truth divine,
Are all absorb'd in beatific light,
And this world, like a rain-drop in the deep
Of time,— for ever from the soul dissolved? —
Our craving passion for the unreveal'd,
Fain would it know to what vast height removed,
To what perfection of sublimest powers

Ye are ascended:—but the dazzled wish
Is driven earthward, and cold Nature cries,
In tones as thrilling as the touch of death,—
"Back to thy clay, Mortality! and bend,
Like faith, before the infinite Unknown!"

* * * * * * * *

As water copies a portentous cloud
By stern reflection, so the spirit's gloom
Lies darkly mirror'd on the mimic page.
And if some features of a faded past
Be thus recall'd,—they bring no aimless grief
To deaden song, by female worth inspired.
For seldom, since the groan of earth began,
Hath woman shone more visibly divine
Than in the gloom of this remember'd year!
When forms all spirit, moulded by the touch
Of nature's most etherial shaping power,
Whose beauty, delicate as painted air,
At the light breeze seem'd ready to dissolve,—
Transform'd by feeling, have at once become
Heroical, for superhuman aid!—
Behold! that chamber where a feeble lamp
Doth quiver, pulse-like, with a dying flame;
There by yon couch a soft-ey'd mourner fades,
Night after night, with uncomplaining brow!
While a soul flutters in that form revered
From whence her being, though her brain should parch,

Till the flush'd eyelids hang like drooping flowers
About to wither, still her watch endures! —
The bough may blossom from the tree removed,
Ere young affection, from its parent torn,
Can live and flourish, while one ebbing pulse
Articulates within those precious veins!

And thus calamity with glory comes:
From out her gloom, as streams from caverns pour,
The tides of human tenderness proceed.
And virtues, which the noon-bright hour of joy
May dazzle when a cloud of anguish breaks,
Dawn into birth, and decorate the soul
With heaven-born lustre;—like the pale-eyed stars
That shut their lids when gaudy daylight rules,
But ope them on the sun-forsaken night!

Then let the scorner, whom the vernal glee,
Or laughing wildness of delighted youth,
Hath taught, that pleasure would to pain deny
The sacrifice of one exalted tear,—
His creed forego: the fount of woman's heart
Lies deeper than his clouded gaze detects!
For beauty, that a soulless idol seem'd,
Rear'd in the breath of some adoring night,—
Oh! let one pang a cherish'd mind convulse,
The mist is scatter'd! and th' unblemish'd heart,

Free from the world, like day from darkness comes,
And acts at once the ministry of heaven!

Then look at woman when, by love sublimed,
Misfortune moulds her by a graceful power
To fit the cast of fate; and in her woe,
Each mental attribute can bloom as bright
As when the home was costly, and her smile
Fell like a glory on attracted eyes!—
As stoops an eagle from his lordly height,
Where once he soar'd, companion of the cloud
And storm,—so sinks with a triumphant fall
Her spirit down to some domestic vale;
There looks more beauteous in each act and thought,
Through the meek round that cottage virtues run,
Than when it reign'd amid the hall of kings.

A mortal weakness by the world admired,
Let others paint her; and in woman find
Th' uncertain heart by light-wing'd impulse led,
The mind that fruitless admiration feeds,
The tottering purpose, and the tameless will,—
There *is* a passion, that with fine eclipse
O'ershadows all which failing hours present,
When the mind falters,—'t is maternal love!—
Almighty feeling! Space, and Scene, and Time,
Succumb before thee; infinite in power,

As fathomless in depth;—no rack affrights,
No dungeon quells, no agony impedes
Thy wond'rous action;—in the horrid grave
Thou dar'st to cherish the unconscious dead,
And heaven admits thee when thou soarest there!

Lo! how that feeling with transforming might
Can shape a spirit to its tender will.
Wild as the breeze, and dainty as the flower,
To-night behold her, on whose jewell'd head
Fashion hath set an ever-fading crown:
Again regard her!—and the trace of God
Is character'd on that etherial change,
Mien, mind, and manner—all have undergone!
As broods a poet o'er some wordless thought,
Affection gazes on her unborn child:
And, ere its being into life expands,
Love,—like a seraph when the soul departs
For glory, waiting to receive its charge,—
Stands on the threshold of commencing life,
Bright with the welcome of a mother's bliss!

Angel of earth! whose light makes human love,
If I apparel with too rich a robe
The fascinations that around thee float,
And on thy beauty let no dimness fall
To mar its radiance,—'tis an error blest,

Though blind: for thou, in thy transcendant worth,
Art lifted to the highest sphere of song,
When, like a human providence below,
Thy days are consecrate to deeds of Heaven.

Lincoln College,
Oxon, 1833.

CANTO FIRST.

WITHOUT whom,—"le commencement de la vie est sans secours, le milieu sans plaisir, et la fin sans consolation."—

MISS EDGEWORTH.

WOMAN,

THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

CANTO FIRST.

EARTH, air, and ocean! glorious three,
Whose power is living poesy!
More gladly than a bird regains
The freedom of unbounded plains,
And wanders on ecstatic wing
O'er meadow, lake, or laughing spring,—
A spirit from the world retreats,
Again the bright creation greets,
And learns how Nature's smile can bless
The hearts that love her loneliness.

How beautiful this quiet hour!
Surrender'd to its lovely power,
The soul forgets that tears are shed,
That hopes are dim, and pleasures dead:
A hue of heaven on earth descends,
Th' immortal with the mortal blends,
And all we fancy, frame, or see,
Is found in faultless harmony!
Oh! ever thus, while men can feel,
And worship, with undying zeal,
The glories that for good combine,
The universe becomes divine:
Behind the veil of sense they dwell,
Encinctured with a dazzling spell;
Where'er they tread, enchantment lives,
And Beauty all her magic gives,
To hallow with poetic grace
Whatever dreaming eye would trace.
To them, the finished world is fraught
With fine appeals to glowing thought;

And meanings flow from all they view,
Of vast in form, or fair in hue;
And not a ray of sunshine gleams,
But there the smile of Godhead seems
A token of paternal love,
Reflected from His face above!

His torpid mind I envy not,
Though crown and kingdom were his lot,
Who here, amid this morning balm,
With Nature eloquently calm,—
With tender sky and tranquil sea
Partook no inborn sympathy.
The canopy of heaven is hung
As blue as poet ever sung;
Though here and there serenely glide
Along the air's cerulean tide
Pale clouds, that seem too delicate
For breeze to touch their fairy state.—
Beneath a window, far away,
Oh, stranger, let thy fancy stray,

For seldom can thy dreams expand
Their wings o'er more delightful land:
The warble of yon distant waves,
As lightly oft the billow laves
The greenwood bank, and grassy shore,
That bounds the sea of Elsinore;
Yon mountain's dim and dusky form,
Which, like a dying thunder-storm,
Glooms on the air with awful swell; [1]
The chiming of the castle bell,
From frowning turret faintly heard;
The fruited boughs by breezes stirred;
With every sound that summer brings
From bird, and bee, and happy things,—
How exquisitely all combine
To make exulting morn divine!

And look adown yon dimpled sea,
As bright as liquid sun could be,
The tiny skiffs of Norway sail,
And glitter cloud-like in the gale;

While frequent oars with flashing stroke
Appear, as oft the tide is broke
By fleet-wing'd bark, that gaily flies
To where the sand-girt Sweden lies,
In green extent of wood and hill,
With bowery hamlets, bright and still.—
To him who loves a haunted scene,
Where grief or glory once hath been,
Grey Cronburgh lifts her storied pile,
And darkens o'er the Danish Isle; [2]
Whose vaulty depths and caves profound
Have echoed to the wizard sound
Of clanging shield, and shaken lance,
With each grim voice of old Romance.
And there on Fancy's spell-bound eyes
Behold! that royal spectre rise,
By Shakspeare summon'd, when the bell
Of midnight groan'd the hour's farewell.—
But, ere thou leave the castled height,
Survey o'er all a patriot sight,

A scene that makes the life-blood start,
And pictures England in his heart.
The banners Nelson thrill'd to see —
Behold them wave! — how gallantly
They flout the wind with haughty threat,
And shew the deep her victor yet!
When bravely down the beauteous tide
The monarchs of the ocean ride;
Or, tranced amid the drowsing air,
They whiten in the noontide glare
Those wings that wait the driving breeze,
To waft them o'er a hundred seas!
Reflected on the wave is cast
The symmetry of sail and mast,
Or, booming o'er the startled deep,
Loud echoes of their cannon sweep,
Whose thunders in their dauntless tone
Can mock the Tempest on his throne!

Yet not on earth exists a scene
Where shades of sorrow have not been:

The softest verdure mead can spread
Hath oft been paced by Misery's tread;
The magic of the clearest sky
Hath mock'd how many a clouded eye!
And, link'd with all that local grace,
The wizard Fancy loves to trace,
Wherever Nature weaves a spell
Round wood, or crag, or hoary dell,
Live recollections sad as deep,
To bid imagination weep.
And thus, in this elysian hour,
Oh! who can gaze on Cronburgh tower,
Nor dream of her, the young and gay,
Whose captive spirit pined away,
The victim of a royal hate, [3]
In the vile gloom of dungeon state!
Dejected queen! I view thee now,
With pleading eye, and pensive brow
As pale as moonlight and as mild;
Or watching o'er thy cradled child,

While visions of regretted youth
Around thee float in fairy truth,
Till the full past o'ercrowds thy brain,
And thou art in thy home again!—
O! when at night the thund'ring sound
Of wave on wave, in deep rebound,
Rang echoed o'er the castle wall,
How wildly did that night appal!
How many a terror shook thy form,
As Midnight roused the yelling storm!
And, like the rush of demons, past
The pinions of the northern blast,
And through a grated window broke
The flashes of each lightning-stroke!—
But oft arose a milder mood,
When gladness e'en an exile wooed,
As, gazing from a rampart's height,
Her eye might gather free delight,
When slowly pealed the turret bell,
And richly over Zealand fell

The flushes of retiring day,
Till earth one mass of glory lay!—
Beneath her roam'd the Baltic wave,
Where oft an English banner gave,
While roll'd the guns saluting roar,—
A dream of that remember'd shore
Her heart was doom'd to hail no more!
There, oft as gradual eve decayed,
And glimmer'd o'er the beechen shade,
How Denmark's bloom her smile would bless,
Laid forth in Eden loveliness,
Of bank and meadow, bush and stream,
Like landscape in a painter's dream!
Or where the rocky Sweden lowers
She mark'd Landscrona's faded towers;
Or musing saw in verdant rest
The garden once by Hamlet prest, [5]
As haunted by majestic grief
The princely mourner scorned relief,
And dared to nurse in dreaming pain
The might and madness of his brain.

With many a gleam of pensive joy,
Her captive gloom could not destroy,
O'er sad Matilda liug'ring past
The lonely years, by fate o'ercast
With shadows of imputed crime,
That deadened hope, and darkened time,
Till when, at Britain's high behest,
The exile found a foreign rest;
Entranced upon the deck she stood,
And, while her straining vision could,
As o'er the billows' bounding play
Her wafted vessel flew away,—
On Cronburgh's battlemented pile,
Array'd by evening's rosy smile,
Matilda fixed her yearning eyes,
While heaved her breast with broken sighs;
And on her cheek rose meek despair,
That mourn'd a child deserted there!—
There, in that tower, where time had been
A sad but still maternal scene:

How thrilling was that farewell hour,
Sublimed by Pity's godlike power!
The mariner subdued his tone,
To make a mother's grief his own;
And souls that mock'd the lightning-flash,
Or dared the billows' wildest dash,
Felt more than milder bosoms fear,
And soften'd down to woman's tear!

But, hark! the wind hath changed his tone;
The sun hath veil'd his burning throne;
And o'er the dazzling blue of heaven
Prophetic shades of storm are driven;
And fiercely shoots the slanting rain
On garden, bower, and window-pane,
While leaflets fall from branch and tree,
Like hopes from human vanity;
And, like the moan of billows, heard
From yon dim ocean, tempest-stirr'd,
With sounds that tell a dreary track,
The waves of life come rolling back —

That awful life! whose endless roar
Breaks loud upon th' eternal shore!

As one, whom torture long hath tried,
And rack'd his eyelids sleep-denied,
When bound in slumber's silken chain,
And calm in heart, and cool in brain,
Awakens on his midnight bed
To ghastly sense or gloomy dread,
And feels again each pang begin
To wrench the writhing soul within —
So wakes a heart that dreams awhile
All earth in sabbath peace to smile
Around him like this lovely isle,
Till darkness on his dream descends,
And in the world his vision ends.

A moment is a mighty thing
Beyond the soul's imagining,
For in it, though we trace it not,
How much there crowds of varied lot!

How much of life, life cannot see,
Darts onward to eternity!
While vacant hours of beauty roll
Their magic o'er some yielded soul,
Ah! little do the happy guess
The sum of human wretchedness;
Or dream, amid the soft farewell
That Time of them is taking,
How frequent moans the funeral knell,
What noble hearts are breaking,
While myriads to their tombs descend
Without a mourner, creed, or friend!

Could Fancy reach some throne of air,
What vision would await her there!
In tumult, agony, and strife,
Rolls the loud sea of human life!
Before a despot's gilded throne
Hear Kingdoms weep, and Nations groan;
Yet tyrants in their slumber start
To feel the dagger at their heart;

And they can hear the murdered call,
Can trace the hand upon the wall,
And not a slave who lays him down
Would change a dungeon for their crown!

Lo! yonder gleams a hoof-torn plain,
Where moonlight shrouds th' unburied slain,
And bare against the naked sky
A thousand helmless foreheads lie!
On one is seen a parting trace,
By torture graven on the face,
As dying Valour swoon'd away,
And blood congeal'd to breathless clay;
While others on their cheeks express
A smile from woman's tenderness,—
A ray of that remember'd scene
Where the bright heaven of home had been!—
But, hark! from ocean heaves a cry
Deeper than when the tempests die,
As down men kneel upon the deck,
And listen to the crashing wreck!—

A minute,—and the murd'rous storm
Hath mangled that colossal form,
That floated o'er terrific seas,
Defied the blast, and faced the breeze,—
But now, a fragment!— and the wave
Lies howling o'er the seaman's grave!

From these avert thy fear-struck view:
A vision, not so dark in hue,
But awful, with its deep array
Of all we suffer, do, or say,—
The throne of Fancy may command,
While picturing with creative hand
The domes and temples, street and bath,
Whate'er a haughty city hath
Of sin and freedom, to decoy
The hearts whose pulse is tuned to joy.—
Oh, what a world of secret care
Lies wall'd within that compass there!
There, thought and deed for ever toil,
And life is one permitted spoil,

As each from cradle to the grave
Is half a tyrant, half a slave,
And shuts his breast, and steels his heart,
While Vice and Virtue play their part,
And rarely lets the spirit speak,
But plants a courtier on his cheek,—
Whose ready smile, like moonlight, when
It flutters o'er some noisome den,
Can bid the soul's corruption shine,
And make its meanness look divine.

Yes! there in yon huge city now,
O'er which young Morning bends her brow,
On tower and temple smiling bright,
How angels wept to watch the night!
A captive tore his chain-worn limb,
And deemed that God deserted him;
A felon heard the life-blood stream,
And saw the gallows in his dream;
The maniac's eye renewed its glare,
While his lip writhed with mocking pray'r;

The miser muttered in his sleep,
And counted o'er and o'er his heap,
Then seem'd with restless hand to hold
And taste the touches of his gold!
And while in rooms of revelry
On wings of light the hours did flee,
A pillow for some dying head
With aching hand and heart was spread;
And who but sleepless Heaven can say,
When Earth confronts the judgment day,
The darkness of a thousand deeds
Which midnight in her shadow breeds!
For ever in the world there lies
What meets alone immortal eyes;
While all man dreads that man should see
He dares unveil to Deity,
As though where guilty feet have trod
No pow'r should track them,—but his God!—
And, pale Ambition! where wert thou?
How wanly on thy wasted brow

The feeble watch-light flung its ray!
While ebb'd thy pulse with dying play;—
But when thy filmy eyes uprose,
Their glance untomb'd thy buried woes;
And round the room a meaning cast,
That told of time and truth o'ercast,
While fever'd blood and martyr'd frame
Avenged the toils that won a name!

And is it thus dark life appears
A fountain of unfailing tears,
While to each minute's flight is given
The gloom of hell, or glance of heaven?
Lo! Nature speaks to all who look,
And read aright her glorious book,
How much there dawns to mitigate
The bleakness of our barren state.
Oh, who can hail the breeze-wing'd morn,
When beauty in the heavens is born,
Or wander forth in sun or storm,
Nor love Creation's living form!

And life, though oft a wilderness
By passion made, and wild distress,
Where, like a leaf by autumn blown,
The wither'd heart must fade alone,—
To spirits nerved by glad desire,
And pure from each debasing fire,
How much it yields of great and good,
To make existence gratitude!—
The wielding of colossal pow'rs,
By which all earth is rendered ours;
The arts, that, link'd with lovely grace,
Form paradise round scene and place;
The pleasures proud as undefined
From fellowship with man and mind,—
If bliss like this a world display,
How weak to frown that world away!
But, ah! there is a brighter charm,
No shade can dim, no cloud disarm;
A star enthroned o'er change and time,
Though meek, unmoved, though soft, sublime;

A glory, with whose beam is blent
A ray that crowns the heart's content;
A spell beyond the world to break,
Which, when our eyes this orb forsake,
Will cling around the parting soul,
And gird it with divine control,
For man design'd by heaven above,—
And wafted down in woman's love!

That power without whose added spell,
So vast, yet so invisible,
The lustre of our spirit wanes,
And pleasures are but smiling pains—
Is holy love, by hearts enjoy'd,
Unchill'd, unchanged, and unalloy'd!
And will the stoic deem me wrong,
A martyr of mistaken song?
Without it, what are crowns and kings,
But barren toys and blighted things!
Art, Wit, and Genius, all we glow
To think cold earth contains below,

By woman's voice, or woman's name,
Have gather'd fortune, might, and fame.—
And ask him whom the world hath worn,
Whose brain is rack'd, whose bosom torn,
Amid the dust, the heat, and strife,
  Around the day concenter'd,
How exquisite that purer life,
  At eve, when he hath enter'd
The garden path where Peace can wind,
And cast the demon Care behind!
The tottering pace of infant feet,
That haste a homeward sire to greet;
Each budding thought, and broken word,
So faintly seen and softly heard;
The tones of air, the tender hues
Affection pours on all it views;
And, sweeter far, those eyes that live
Upon the rays his own can give,
Now kindled into fond excess
Of light that speaks, and looks that bless,—

To him who feels such blended power
To hallow eve's domestic hour,
The star of life, where'er he roam,
Is she whose ray attracts him home.

But godlike is the creature man!
The past is glittering where he ran
Triumphantly his onward track,
With prints of glory!—trace them back;
Behold him stamp o'er land and sea
The might of immortality!
To him whom waves nor winds restrain,
The Elements resign their reign;
While cowering Earth and Ocean meet,
To lay their sceptres at his feet,
Whose hand the rock or mountain fells,
Or strews the globe with miracles
Of form and motion — wond'rous things,
That mimic God's imaginings!—
And in his mind there is a sense
That gasps to reach omnipotence;

Who, half almighty, would be more
Than life can feel, or thought explore!

Yet, not because with bolder light
The traits of manhood court the sight,
And Action, with incessant claim,
Can summon forth each high-born aim,
The softer tints of woman's soul
Pervade the world with less control.
The thunder is the king of sound,
But ever may the breeze abound,
And quiver on melodious wing,
Where beauty walks, or health can spring:
The forest wears inspiring gloom,
But yet we seek the flowerets' bloom;
Old Ocean hath terrific grace
Imprinted on his hoary face,
But oh! how dear some tranquil dream,
That haunts the bank of village stream! —
And thus, methinks, doth woman's heart
A gentler, not less glorious part

In Life's dim tragedy fulfil,—
The feebler, but the perfect still:
And as in Nature charms there be,
Which all enjoy, though none can see,
The light and love of female power
Have graced how many a graceless hour,
And round the spirit twined a zone
Too delicate for eyes to own!
Let Valour, Strength, and Wisdom, claim
Their summit on the throne of fame;
Yet meeken'd heart and mind subdued
Become the charm of womanhood;
And thoughts that might creation wield,
By man's dominion taught to yield,
Lie mute and dead in lonely rest,
And leave the soul but half exprest!—
For man, not nature, is the power
That darkens from its natal hour
The mind which decks the softer race,
And dooms them to a second place.

Yet even thus, no formal chain
Can frighten, fetter, or restrain
That spirit-burst, from time to time,
When, blazing forth with beam sublime,
The mind of woman proves a spell
To make a truth shine visible —
That GENIUS of no sex can be,
When radiant with divinity!
And though in life her lovely sway
Fall dew-like o'er the parched day,
She rules that noiseless under-tide
Of happy thoughts by home supplied.—
But, see! when Peril claims her part,
The hero of a woman's heart!
Though weak in hand, and frail in form,
Her spirit strengthens with the storm;
In vain the warning thunders roll,
They rally, not subdue, her soul!

Yet some there be who soil her worth
With every shade of vulgar earth,

Nor dream her highest glory can
Ascend beyond — a slave for man!
But vile that soul, however fraught,
If pride of sex be only taught:
The mind has lost its master grace,
And thoughts demean their lofty race,
When female love and virtue claim
No laurel in the wreath of fame,
While all that Genius should adore
Is laugh'd away, to live no more!—
Not thus the bright and perfect ONE,
Whose blood redeem'd a world undone,
Of woman spake, when MAN had flown,
And Mary watch'd and wept alone!—

Another and a darker race,
Whose doctrine might the brute disgrace,
So vilely from the dust of earth
It sprang, to prove its sullied birth,—
Oh! name it not, but let it be
Entomb'd in voiceless infamy!

If he who dares a shrine deface,
Where time has left a holy trace,
Is branded for his impious zeal
By all who ancient glory feel,—
What damning tones can language find
For him who would profane the mind,
And dare, with sacrilegious smile,
The temple of the soul defile!—
Affection, deep as hearts desire,
Yet fed by intellectual fire;
Those graces felt, but undefined,
In gleams and glances of the mind,
Developed in a myriad ways,
By mien or manner, look or gaze;
The tones in dewy cadence heard
From lips that harmonize each word,
All, all the bright attraction bred,
From each fond smile a soul hath shed,—
Oh! these transcend what Passion's might
Can raise, to charm her maniac sight.

And when disease's poison'd breath
Hath tainted life with hues of death;
When time has dimm'd that starry gaze
Whose magic thrill'd our younger days,—
There is a love whose light remains
To warm the heart, when passion wanes:
For beauty born within the mind
Admits no mean decay;
The earth may shrink, the sun grow blind,
Ere that dissolve away!

Then let them boast, base epicures!
Whom naught but sense to love allures;
To them may coarse Derision give
No hearts but where like passions live,
While, dungeon'd in a sensual grave,
Their spirit rots, and dies a slave!

Alas! how oft since time began
Hath woman been abased by man;

To wisdom's rank denied a claim,
Beyond the worst or weakest aim;
Or, doom'd by others, living toys
For brutal dreams, or selfish joys!
But thou, my England! first to be
In heart refined, in spirit free,
For ever may the virgin smile
Of woman consecrate thine isle!—
To guard thee should fond ocean fail,
Thy banners cease to awe the gale,
Thy throne become a crushing weight
Of tyranny on rank and state,—
Thy genius and thy glory fled,
With each proud pulse of freedom dead—
E'en *then*, with female worth to throw
Its heavenliness round want and woe,
Ruled by the heart's unsullied reign,
A kingdom might revive again.
But, trample once upon that shrine
Where Love hath sainted as divine

That beauty which our dreams adore,—
Religion, virtue, truth,— are o'er!
And sooner shall Gomorrah rise
From out her grave to greet the skies,
Than empires where no morals bloom
Awaken from their living tomb!

Oh! what a curse for them who can
So beautify the world of man,
Yet prostitute their lofty line,
To render woman less divine.
A tyrant, when his wrath is o'er,
Can break the chain, and back restore
The dungeon'd captive into day;
And tears may suffer'd wrong allay;
And scarce a pang the good endure,
But some atoning sigh may cure;
But what is written — that is writ!
No soul-wrung tear may cancel it;
Like demons on dark errand sent
From out their fiendish element,—

Polluting thoughts, by passion fired,
Career the world, untamed, untired;
From heart to heart their plague is spread,
From soul to soul corruption bred,
Till myriads, by their baneful spell,
Are tempted to the brink of hell!—

I envy not the unconfess'd
Remorse that gnaws his lonely breast,
Who weeps o'er that perverted mind,
That, godlike, should have graced mankind,—
Yet, bow'd to be the mental slave
Of crimes that curse beyond the grave!
For when at noon of life he sees
His children circling round his knees;
Or triumphs in each dimpling grace
That dawns within a daughter's face,—
What pangs with that proud moment cope,
What terror blights each blooming hope!
Perchance within his dying brain
Shall ring some recollected strain,

And gloomily those visions throng,
Corruption loved to shape in song,
And, while they darken round his head,
Portray the crimes their poison bred;
Till Fancy hears the parting groan
Of souls that shudder'd like his own!

Then, not for that unloving race,
Who scorn each intellectual grace;
Or them, whose coarseness would destroy
The elegance of human joy,—
Be mine the lay. Yet should there be
A heart that loves true heart to see;
A father who has felt how dear
The woman whom his thoughts revere;
A mother in whose watchful eye
Affections deep and endless lie;
A maiden who hath known how sweet
The sister of her soul to greet;
Or lover, who in lofty youth
Hath pleaded with impassioned truth

To shape of Beauty, by whose light
The universe became so bright!—
If such one hour this page beguile,
My guerdon be their grateful smile.

Oh! might he cull the richest tones
Poetical enchantment owns,
For melody to waft along
The spirit of prevailing song;
And summon from the caves of Thought
Whatever shaping dreams had wrought,—
A bard might think his visions rife
With rays of feeling, caught from life,
For in that life what bliss was owed
To all that woman's reign bestowed!—
The smoothest voice, the softest word,
Delighted moments ever heard;
The dearest smile that Pity shed
To tame the darkness sorrow bred;
The shadow of an angel seen,
Where Goodness unobserved had been;

And, more than all, devoted truth,
Whose years retain'd undying youth,—
If such a crowd of memory's charms
No passion in the poet warms,
It is because no words express
The light of woman's loveliness;
And more than Poetry can speak
Is mirrored on her brow and cheek;
While feelings oft the most sublime
Refuse to be portray'd in rhyme,
Though brightly round the heart they throng,
And seem the archetype of song.—
If doom like this attend my aim,
The song, but not the subject, blame.

CANTO SECOND.

Yours was the nobler birth,
For you from man were made;—man but of earth,
The son of dust!

RANDOLPH.

WOMAN,

THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

CANTO SECOND.

When first the wings of Light unfurl'd
Their radiance o'er a new-born world,
And choral music, faint and far,
Awoke in each melodious star,
Until the glowing Earth began
To thrill beneath the gaze of man!—
Ah! who can paint the primal bliss
That charm'd an hour superb as this!

How beauteous in his dawn of birth,
Without a shade of sullied earth,

Without one touch of deadly sin
To mar the perfect soul within,—
The lord of Eden must have stood,
When God beheld, and call'd him,— good!
Oh! to have heard his lips reveal
The first delight that dust could feel;
Have listen'd to each wild address
He paid to nature's loveliness;
Or, flashing from his heaven-turn'd eye
Have mark'd the spirit's majesty,
While round his heart Religion stole,
And mirror'd Him who made the whole!

A melody from leaf and flower,
Responding to the breeze's power,
That warbled with exulting tone;
A blooming light on all things thrown,
On fruit and foliage, grass and lake;
The song that in sweet gushes brake
From birds that flew on fearless wing,
And taught the very air to sing!—

The mute delight, majestic trance,
Of things that shunn'd no mortal glance,
But gazed on man with love or glee,
And felt that life was amity;
While, stainless as a pall of light,
The cope of heaven hung crystal bright,
And pour'd upon each perfect limb
A lustre that apparell'd him;
While ever, as he rais'd his eye,
A seraph, floating through the sky,
With gleams of glory track'd his way,
Or arch'd his wings in beaming play,—
Though all like this composed a scene,
To testify where God had been,
A soft disease of soul began
To prey upon the bliss of man:
A yearning which no language spoke,
Within his clouded bosom woke,
A loneliness with awful weight
Lay brooding o'er his desert fate,

And darken'd with ideal shade
The countenance that heaven display'd;
Till sadly was each primal word
Upon the placid breezes heard!—
"Some other Form, oh! let there be,
To live, and love, and roam with me
This lone but gorgeous wilderness
Of sights that woo and sounds that bless!
Some Spirit whom my own can greet,
Some hand to hold, some eye to meet;
Creator! if Thy wisdom can,
Oh! let there be a mate for man!"

More lovely than a vision brought
From out the fairy realms of thought;
Serene and silent, with a grace
Divinely breath'd o'er form and face,
In full array of love and light,
That dazzled his adoring sight,
By soul and sense to be revered,—
The Angel of the world appear'd!

Then, what a starry welcome rang!
Each Orb an hymeneal sang,
While shapes unutterably bright
From heaven gazed down with new delight,
When first the ground a woman trod,
Just moulded by the hand of God!—
Around her breast, in wreathy play,
Her locks like braided sunbeams lay;
And limbs unveil'd a radiance cast
Of purity, as on she pass'd
Amid the bloom and balm of flowers,
That clustered round elysian bowers;
The bird and breeze together blent
Their notes of mildest languishment;
The sun grew brighter as he shed
His glory round her living head,—
As if no orb of space were free
From one fine spell of sympathy,
When woman rose upon the scene,
Creation's fair and faultless queen!

When Adam's tranced eyelids woke,
Thus brightly on his vision broke
The living Shape for whom he pined,
To share his unpartaken mind:—
Awhile they gazed in hush'd delight,
Each dazzled with the other's sight,
Then saw within their mutual eyes
Magnetic rays of soul arise,
And heard their lips fond tones repeat,
And heard their hearts in concert beat,
And felt within electric fire
Their spirit, blood, and brain, inspire:—
Then woman was adored by man!
The bridal dawn of love began.
Oh! then was born of breathing truth
A feeling in unfaded youth,
That blooms above the vile decay
Of things which time and sense array,
And, when the dying world departs,
Lives greenly in celestial hearts!

And thus, with all that forms a friend
The finer tints of love to blend;
To soothe the tempest, share the calm,
And pour on grief unfailing balm,—
Did woman on the world appear:
And hath she fail'd in life's career?—
The warrior wins a bright renown,
The poet wears a peerless crown,
And History with heroic grace
Hath laurell'd her triumphant race;
But where, in what recording book,
Could unforgetting Nature look,
To count, since first her ages ran,
What woman hath endured for man?—
Alas! like dews which night hath felt
Within ungrateful earth to melt,
And freshen into living flowers
The grove that smiles at morning hours—
The virtues born of woman's soul,
Though time has drunk their mild control,

And had by them the heart supplied
With what the ruder sex denied,—
Yet, these in dead oblivion fade,
Unknown, unsung, and undisplay'd!

But might those Spirits who have been
Still watchers of our troubled scene,
Beholding with dejected eye
The throes of human agony,—
To earth repeat the tale of life,
Since first convulsed with gloom and strife,
How much, methinks, would Virtue prize
That never dazzled mortal eyes,
As angels read the awful story
Of empires dim, and ages hoary,
And, while they scorn'd a hero's crown,
To woman gave the heart's renown! [6]—
For pangs that tore with secret sway,
For tears by night, and toils by day;
For tortures by the world untraced,
When love was wreck'd and truth defaced;

For fondness in the fiercest hour
Of tyrant wrath, or ruin's power,—
For every sad and silent wrong
That weakness suffer'd from the strong,—
For these, and all young feeling bore,
When Mis'ry made it love the more!
A chaplet of celestial light
Would angels weave for woman's right.—
Oh! she is all that soul can be,
One deep, undying sympathy!—
When life is scarce a moving dream,
'Tis like her spirit's native beam,
That never from its fountain stays,
But lives alone within her rays!
And, round an infant, how divine
The wreath a mother's arms can twine!—
And when dark years of manhood bring
Their load of fated suffering,
As true as echo to the sound,
Her blessings to his wants abound!

In sickness, ah! how smooth the bed
Her healing hand alone can spread;
And, when the shades of death advance,
What paradise within her glance,
While all her yearning soul appears
Dissolved in love, to die in tears!—

Yet, scarce had Eden pass'd away,
And Sin begun her blighting sway,
Ere woman lost her mental rank,
And in domestic thraldom sank;—
A creature whose attractive power
Might serve to gild a wanton hour,
To feed a passion, sooth a frown,
Or magnify her lord's renown,—
But ever, with unvalued heart,
In life to play the menial part!—
Ay, e'en in Greece, that land sublime
Whose glory lit the wings of time,
E'en there, where beauty's faultless mould
Surpass'd what Sculpture's dreams behold,

In vain would truth a model see,—
Her love was no divinity!
From earth it sprung, on earth to live
On every charm that sense can give,
But all proud Sentiment could teach,
Divine in thought, or pure in speech,—
By her unfelt, or unadmired,
Hath scarce one classic page inspired,
And Rome, whose wizard banner waved
O'er half the isles far ocean laved,
By conquest was not taught to school
The passions Heaven alone can rule;
But offer'd up each female right
On altars of their stern delight,
Where rage might spend its haughty breath,
And doom a guiltless heart to death.

But Rome and Greece, eternal two!
Have shown the world what mind can do;
And still from them the streams of mind
With living freshness charm mankind:

Their language in immortal notes
Around our list'ning spirit floats;
Their genius, throned in hallowed state,
Is haunted by the good and great;
And, high-born is the zeal that pays
True homage to heroic days,
When Valour woke the breath of thought,
And poets sang the fields they fought!
Yet when prevail'd in Greece or Rome
The magic of a modern home?—
There lives the light our spirit hails,
There beats the heart that never fails,
There smiles beyond a realm to bring
Round calmest hours are clustering!
Where queens of mild affection reign,
The bloom of joy, the balm of pain;
And thus are more, when grey or young,
Than Homer dream'd, or Maro sung.

When first on Rome a tameless horde
From forest-depths their myriads pour'd,

And down to dust her empire broke,—
Refinement's moral dawn awoke.[7]
The gloomy brow, the glaring eye,
The breast that never heaved a sigh,
But nurtured in its wild domain
The glory of surmounted pain,—
Amid them all, there lived a sense
Of woman's meek pre-eminence,
While chastity within the heart
Was shrined beyond pollution's art.—
O, nature! in thy darkest mood
How much remains of bright and good!
What Learning in her proudest day,
What Genius in her godlike sway,
With blended power, could never reach,
These warriors of the wild could teach!—
'Tis pleasant in the storm to see
The battle of some glorious tree,
Whose branches with resentful play
Can awe the beaten winds away:

But, beautiful! in calmer hours
To view it wave o'er meadow flowers,
And hearken to its whisper mild,
Like blessing murmur'd o'er a child:—
For thus, methinks, the contrast seen,
When beauty reign'd where war had been;
When lion port and eagle eye
Had laid their horrid menace by,
And, resting in some oaken shade,
While round him laughing infants play'd,
The savage of the desert grew
Refined beneath a woman's view!—

Next, Chivalry, heroic child,
With brow erect, and features wild,
Placed Love upon his matchless throne,
For gallantry to guard alone.
Then, woman! in that reign of heart,
How peerless was thy magic part!
A word was more than human breath,
A smile dissolved the gloom of death,

And beauty, while it awed the brave,
But made the mind a noble slave
To honour, in the chastest light,
That ruled the soul, or charm'd the sight.—
And shall we, in a sterner age,
When love hath grown more coldly sage,
With frigid laugh and frown decry
The bright return of Chivalry?—
The trumpet-music of the past,
In tales of glory doom'd to last,—
No longer must one echo stir
The pride of English character?
Alas! our life is worldly lore;
The reign of heart-romance is o'er;
And all that fired heroic toil
Hath now become a meaner spoil,
For time and circumstance to win,
While self is throned secure within.—
Yet, valour in its fine excess,
A scorn that wither'd littleness,

Devotion in its grandest shape,
And love, that sought no mean escape,—
Oh! darkly sunk, and vilely sway'd,
The clime that wills their might decay'd;
And ever prompts each servile art
To flourish in th' unweeded heart,
Till day by day we learn to see
That self is true philosophy!

But, far beyond all forming powers
That made expressive beauty ours,
In that pure shape by Heaven design'd
To soften, sooth, and sway, mankind,—
The Gospel, like a god, began
To rouse the fallen soul of man:
Then, spirit, by the sense unbound,
Arose with grace immortal crown'd!
Emotions deep, unstain'd desires,
Serener hopes, and chaster fires,
Came flowing from a fount above,
All freshen'd with etherial love!

'Twas then that woman — like a star,
Whose beam had flutter'd dim and far,
And shed upon the troubled soul
A ray of undiscern'd control,—
Advanced above life's daily sphere,
Disclosed her radiance, full and near;
And kindled for beclouded man
The light that only woman can.
Restored to reign, as fair and good
As once in Eden's bower she stood,
The seraph of the soul to be
In love's divine fidelity,—
Religion, when its healing smile
First trembled o'er our patriot isle,
By her assuasive meekness won
A way to visit hearts undone.
And did her christian valour quake
To front the vengeance of the stake?—
E'en there apostles might have known
A faith whose firmness match'd their own:[9]

Though limb by limb the fire devour'd,
She neither shook, nor shriek'd, nor cower'd,
But gloried, in the murd'rous flame,
To sing a martyr'd Saviour's name!

And view th' applauded domes that rise
In holy grandeur to the skies,—
How much to female hands they owe
Their power to lessen human woe! [10]
But, ah! how exquisite must be
Those charities that none can see,
In lovely darkness hid awhile,
Surrounded with Jehovah's smile!—
Till, lit by unexpected light,
They glitter on the pilgrim's sight,
When haply in some village dale
His soul hath drunk the secret tale,
How Holiness her beauty shed
Around a dying mourner's bed.
Thus oft upon the travell'd plain,
Where Winter holds his bleakest reign,

In sudden bloom young flow'rets rise
And blush beneath our gazing eyes!—
For, leaving oft her splendid home,
Unheeded will Compassion roam,
And, where the roofs of sorrow lie,
Give tear for tear, and sigh for sigh,
To famine deal the daily bread,
For sickness hold the drooping head,
Be mother to some orphan boy,
Make widow'd hearts to sing for joy,
And, should the parting soul despair,
Ope heaven,—and plead for entrance there!

And what were life, if woman's heart
Attemper'd with no guiding art
The moral beauty of the mind,
Whereby the world is kept refined,
And each soft hue opinion wears
Its lovely origin declares?—
Go, find a land where female grace
Is honour'd by no gallant race,

And man's dominion deems it vile
To bend beneath a woman's smile,
But tramples with a brute delight
On mental rank and moral right,—
How darkly do her people sink!
How meanly act, how basely think!
No loftiness that clime reveals,
No purity the spirit feels;
Corruption cankers law and throne,
The language breathes a dungeon tone,
And seldom there hath Virtue smiled:—
But, wither'd, weaken'd, and defiled,
It moulders on from age to age,
The scorn of hero, bard, and sage,
And seems on glorious earth to be
The plague-spot of her infamy!

And vain would truth reflect in song
What nameless fascinations throng
Around that quiet hearth alone,
Where tenderness hath rear'd its throne.—

Oh! there are feelings, rich but faint,
The hues of language cannot paint;
And pleasures, delicately deep,
Which, like the palaces of sleep,
Melt into dimness, when the Light
Would look upon their fairy sight;
And there are chords of happiness
Whose spirit-tones our fancy bless,
And make the music of our joy
Complete without one harsh alloy,—
Yet, vain would words one note reveal
Of melody which mind can feel!—
But who hath left some calm domain
Where home was charm'd by woman's reign,
And trifles, through some magic, wore
An air they never breathed before,—
And enter'd where a proud abode
To ruder man its splendour owed,
Nor felt the contrast sternly cold,
Like winter o'er his spirit roll'd?

Yet there may garden, grove, and bower,
Attend on each retiring hour;
There Painting with impassion'd glow
The poetry of colours show;
While volumes rank'd in rich array
The heroes of the mind display;—
Yet, like a face, when death has chill'd
The light that once each feature fill'd,
Contrasted with its living power
Beheld in some excited hour,—
Are homes where single man is seen,
With those where woman's spell hath been.

Alas! for them whose toil-worn days,
Uncheer'd by Love's adorning rays,
In crawling loneliness depart,
Yet fret the bloom from out the heart.
Though Life, as lord of each desire,
To intellectual thrones aspire,
May win the laurel, wear the crown,
And madden envy with renown,—

How much beyond what dreams bestow
Their loveless hours can never know!
With nothing but cold self to please,
The waters of the spirit freeze,
And years but harden while they chill
A bosom left unsocial still:
And like a tree by autumn shorn
Of all that summer boughs had borne,—
A leafless, bare, and blighted thing,
Where scarce a breeze will deign to sing,—
Is man bereft of that control
That flashes from a female soul.
For heart with heart was born to beat,
And soul with soul was made to meet,
And sex for sex design'd to be
The dawn of endless sympathy!—

But ye! the laurell'd host who live
A life beyond mere earth to give;
The deities of dazzled Thought,
To whom her incense aye is brought;

Ye Alexanders of the mind,
Who conquer, but to charm, mankind!
Enchanters! for the spirit's eyes
Remoulding ruin'd paradise;
Interpreters, whose tones declare
The dialogues of sea and air;
The priests of Nature, taught to praise
And worship her mysterious ways;
Ye intellectual Kings of time!
Triumphant, matchless, and sublime,—
How fervently your pages own,
In music of transcendant tone,
That woman in her lovely might
Drew worship, wonder, and delight,
From souls whose inward glance could see
Visions that crowd eternity!

Impassioned lords of deathless song!
To them the lips of Time belong,
As, fired with their majestic fame,
From age to age, they sound their name,

And bid the world enshrine that scene
Where once a worshipp'd bard hath been,—
For hallow'd seems his natal spot
Where thrones are crush'd, and kings forgot!
And they have earn'd that gorgeous debt
Of praise, that time is paying yet,
Who taught us,—though it bore the curse,—
To love the heaven-born universe,
And trace, wherever goodness trod,
The lustre of a living God!

And glorious is it, when the base
Would frown upon Heaven's fairest race,
To echo into life again
The music of some master strain;
And prove, amid the ranks of fame,
How each who won undying name
In love's applauding eye could see
The ruling star of poetry.

Then let me from the poet-throng,
Who hymn'd on earth unearthly song,

Select some all-surpassing few,
And, as they rise in proud review,—
Let him whose spirit ever bow'd
Before the passion it avow'd;
Whose bosom hath been thrill'd or shaken
With dream fulfill'd, or hope forsaken,—
Exult to find his soul hath felt
A power that could the mightiest melt;
That lent to genius half its glow,
That taught eternal song to flow,
For fancy plumed the wing of fire,
And warm'd the soul of every lyre,—
Whose language was the light of thought
From love in adoration wrought!

With paleness on his awful brow,
Who riseth like a spectre now
From darkness, where his fancy dared
To wander with an eye unscared,
And gaze on visions, such as roll
Around that blighted Angel's soul,

Who baffles in his dread domain
An immortality of pain?—
'T is Dante!—whose terrific flight,
Through caverns of Cimmerian night,
Imagination vainly tries
To track with unappalled eyes!
Severe, august, and sternly great,
The gloom of his remorseless fate [11]
Around him hung that dismal air
That broodeth o'er intense despair;
Till frenzy half began to raise
A wildness in his fearful gaze,
As, roaming over crag and wood,
He battled with bleak solitude!—
For sooner might the maniac roar
Of ocean cease to awe the shore,
When starlight comes with fairy gleam,
Than pity lull his tortured dream!
Oh! 't is not in the poet's art
To paint the earthquake of his heart,

The storm of feeling's ghastly strife,
When she, who form'd his life of life,
Had vanish'd like a twilight ray
Too delicate on earth to stay:—
For love had heated blood and brain,
A fire in each electric vein,—
A passion whose exceeding power
Was heaven or hell to each wild hour!

But, from the wreck of ruin'd days
What gorgeous vision did he raise!
Since ne'er was beauty so divine
Embodied in a breathing shrine
As throned Beatrice on high,
In the dark blaze of Deity!—
Her forehead wreath'd with starry light,
And she herself,—oh! what a sight
On Dante glitter'd, when afar
He listen'd to her mystic car;
As, wafted in a cloud of flowers,
And guarded by angelic Powers,

In veil of fire, her spirit came,
And warbled his remember'd name!
He bow'd beneath her awful look,
Then gazed, until his being shook
Like water, when the winds convulse
And stir it, like a quivering pulse!—
But when the wing'd Enchantress soar'd
To where the Godhead was adored,
Without a shadow, speck, or bound,
Eternity lay imaged round!
There, on a beatific throne
Again he saw her, bright and lone.—
Ineffably one look she cast,
Angelic features ne'er surpass'd,
On him, who knelt entranced awhile
Within the glory of her smile;
Till, lo! in deep excess of light
She faded from his yearning sight!—

Like one who leaves a savage dell
Where day hath bid the sun farewell,

Comes forth, to view autumnal beams
On bank, and wood, and roaming streams,—
Is he who turns from Dante's gloom
To see poetic flow'rets bloom,
As dreams of beauty dawn and glow
Along the page of Petrarch's woe.—
How touching are those mental tears,
Delighted throbs, and dazzled fears,—
The penance by his genius paid,
Whenever recreant fancy stray'd
Beyond the tone of pure desire!—
'T was Laura tuned his pensive lyre:
Madonna-like, and sweetly mild,
And pure as an untempted child,
Amid her white-robed virgin throng
He saw her beauty glide along,
When lilies deck'd her sun-bright hair
Amid the walls of lone St. Claire.—
That hour became his second birth!
Her glory overveil'd the earth;

And never did a Ghebir kneel
Before his orb with truer zeal
Than Petrarch at that living shrine,
Where dwelt the soul he knew divine!—
To him she was a spotless thing,
Too bright for earthly bard to sing;
A miracle of life and love,
A dream embodied from above,
A seraph, whose unclouded eyes
Reflected back their native skies!

From her his inspiration came;
Each song enshrin'd her hidden name;
And not a shadow, tint, or sound,
Creation could invent around,
But he beguiled with beauteous art
To typify her taintless heart!
How fervently his homage glows!
Pure from the mind it springs and flows,
Exhausting, as his numbers roll,
The life-blood of a feeling soul!

For Laura seem'd his spirit's breath,
And ruled it when she sunk in death;
Then, day and darkness, scene and hour,
Were haunted with her holy power;
And, when her smile illumed it not,
The faded world was soon forgot:
Since only to embalm her name
He panted for eternal fame.—

Adorner of the human race!
Great Nature's rival, who could trace
Her features with such perfect skill
That time can but remould them still,—
So matchless is that mighty one
Whom Fancy now would gaze upon!—
Go, lend the skies a lovelier blue,
Or sunbeams o'er the sunshine strew;
Bid Horror to the tempest bring
A louder shriek and blacker wing;
Or dare to teach a deeper tone
To Thunder on his midnight throne,—

So powerless seems a poet's line
To render Shakspeare more divine!
All tears and smiles to him belong;
All clouds that round the spirit throng;
All passions, principles, and powers,
Which wring the heart, or rule its hours,
In language Nature's lip had taught,—
By him were into being wrought!
So sternly with creative art
He drew the drama of the heart,
That, long as tears haunt human eyes,
Or Pleasure laughs, or Sorrow sighs,
Whatever path his genius trod,
We hail him earth's poetic god.

And round him is a dimness thrown?
The colour of his life unknown?
While meaner names are chronicled,
And baseness in false light beheld,
That master-piece of mortal clay,—
Unhonour'd did he die away?

Yes, like an orb, whose affluent rays
Demand of earth no greeting praise,
He scatter'd intellectual light,
Immortal in unconscious might!
Sublimely careless of renown,
Then lay his awful spirit down,
Nor dreamt that Glory's arm would wave
Her brightest banner o'er his grave!

But yet there be faint shadows cast
From pining years which he had past,
That tell us how the soul could brook
The pangs that once his bosom shook;
When dark-eyed beauty rack'd and wrung
A heart round which the world had clung!—[12]
Her hair was like the sheen of night,
When blackness seems to make it bright;
And melody her touch obey'd
When o'er the chords her fingers stray'd:
But sorrow dash'd her april years
With cold and melancholy tears;

And thus there grew a wild unrest
Within the gloom of Shakspeare's breast,
Till he who sung what Romeo felt
Beneath like pangs was doom'd to melt,
And hide within his dreaming brain
The visions of a lover's pain.

And well may woman proudly think
That he whose spirit thus could drink
Absorbing rays from beauty's eyes
Hath sphered her sex amid the skies!—
And none like him love's essence knew,
From hidden soul the lightning drew,
That subtle, secret, silent flame,
For which the heart hath found no name:
There 's not a throb that woman feels,
There 's not a ray her mind reveals,
And scarce a blush on brow and cheek,
When blood would rise, and almost speak!—
But Shakspeare hath the whole divined,
And held a mirror to the mind,

That Nature o'er his magic glass
Might view each play of feature pass.—
And what a life-breath'd air there seems
To freshen those embodied dreams,
Where character and grace arise,
To feast our unforgetting eyes
With all Affection can display,
When most we bow beneath her sway! —
Bright, beautiful, and young, and warm,
With tears that melt, and tongues that charm,—
The creatures whom he call'd to birth
We pine to meet on mortal earth;
And trace by his revealing art
The windings of a woman's heart.—

As moonlight weaves a varied spell
O'er rock and mountain, grove and dell,
So Love with his transforming beam
Hath colour'd each romantic dream,
As, stern or mild, the spirit lay
Beneath the spell-work of his ray.—

A sense of beauty,—it was thine,
As deep, as burning, and divine,
As ever fed with living fire
The passion of a poet's lyre,
Thou martyr! whom Alphonso's hate
Imprison'd for a madman's fate,
Because ere yet the lips could speak
Emotion had betray'd thy cheek,
To tell him how a bard could dare
To love a princess—and despair!—
That love was like a blasting sun,
It sear'd the heart it shined upon!
But, oh! how much of Tasso's strain
Was born of his devoted pain;
When feelings in their hopeless strife
Contended with those clouds of life
That 'tween him and his idol grew,—
Till death alone could break them through.

His youth was lonesome; and the light
Of half that won or wooed the sight,

Th' enchantment of his spirit shed,
Till earth was heaven beneath his tread!
And Nature, like a mother, smiled
On him, her musing foster-child;
To whom her voice from wave or wind
Came with a magic more refined
Than echoes from the human soul;
And, where a quiet stream did roll,
While shade and sunshine blent their power,
He charm'd his own creative hour!—
Till voiceless aspirations rose,
His bosom lost its young repose,
And round his heart a syren came
And murmur'd his immortal name!
Thus fancy set the soul on fire,
Till life itself he found aspire
To beauty, like that spirit bright,—
When, tender as the touch of light,
Fair Leonora's vision stood
Before him, fresh in womanhood!

And all the heart's creation drew
At length his living eyes could view.—
What heavenliness array'd her form,
How exquisite the blushing storm
Of love's betray'd emotion rose!
When Tasso read his lyric woes,
And saw her eye's transparent blue
Bedimm'd with soul, dissolving through!
Morn after morn, in youth's ripe age,
He read his own melodious page,
While Leonora's lips of love
The garland of his glory wove,
In words whose magic seem'd to be
The tones of immortality!—

And could they side by side remain
Nor feel the heart's delicious pain?
The might of that magnetic gaze
That each to each would softly raise?
Could Tasso in that perill'd hour
Be dead to passion's dawning power?

Alas for him!—Alphonso came
And bade a dungeon hide his flame!—
They tore him to a hideous cell,
(Ferrara hath revered it well)
And left him, for a maniac's doom,
To rot in suffocating gloom!—
Yet, mis'ry could not then decay
The dream that wore his mind away,
Though frenzy might its faith destroy,
Till life became a wretched toy,—
Yet passion round his wreck would smile,
Like evening o'er a faded pile:
But, when his Leonora died,
And ev'ry bard a wreath supplied,
To grace the glory of her bier,—
Could Tasso's Muse deny a tear?
Yes! silence was the tomb of pain,
And grief was voiceless, when 'twas vain.—
Let fancied woe prepare a sigh
To deck the fate of those who die;

And hypocrites their cheeks array
With gloom to serve a venal day,—
The pangs that load a loftier breast
Lie deep, and dark, and unexprest;
Yet, sternness in that blank despair
Hath buried more than anguish there!—

Another of the wond'rous see!
Whose spirit talk'd with Deity,
And, blind on earth, beheld in heaven
The glory to archangels giv'n,
When, robed in light, their garments blaze
And whiten in eternal rays!—
No cavern'd prophet, while he felt
A trance almighty round him melt;
Or, by some Babylonian stream
From darkness shaped his awful dream,
Wherein there glided, vast and dim,
The cloud-apparell'd cherubim,—
Hath scarce outsoar'd his epic flight
Who sang of Chaos, Death, and Night!—

Had none, methinks, but Milton's song
Pour'd its grand tide the world along,
Had never page but his reveal'd
The miracles in mind conceal'd,—
The hope immortal still would rest
Unblighted in the human breast;
For, never could a narrow grave
Th' immeasurable soul enslave,
That compass'd air, and heaven, and hell,—
The lord of his creative spell!

With what a melody divine
The river of each noble line
Flows onward!—faint, or loud, or deep,
Accordant to the numbers' sweep.
Go, enter some majestic fane,
And listen to the organ-strain,
When melting clouds of music float
Down the dim aisles with blending note,
Now, with wild melodious thunder
The vaulted pavement echoes under,

Then, aloft in flights of sound,
The winged harmonies abound,—
Evanishing like birds that stray
And skyward sing their boundless way!—
For thus can Milton's numbers roll
Their cadence o'er the tranced soul.

And can we deem that he who drew
In lines of love so brightly true
The mother of our mortal race,
And made the glory of her face
To dazzle back a demon's guile,
When Eden laugh'd beneath her smile,—
Can nature dream poetic art
Reflected not his own pure heart?
The lady-pilgrim of the wood
In starlike beauty, lone and good,
Was copied from a shape, perchance,
That kindled youth's adoring glance.—
There is a tale—and let it live
Such life as fond romance can give,

That once, as slumb'ring Milton lay
In umbrage from the noon-warm day,
Beneath the twilight of a tree,
That arch'd its waving canopy,—
A maiden saw his sleeping face,
And, spell-bound with its beauteous grace,
Her wonder in sweet song express'd,
And placed it on the poet's breast;—
"If eyes when shut the heart can take,
How bright their vict'ry when awake!"—
Oh! who can tell what beauty flow'd
From feelings by such words bestow'd;—
The Eve of his enchanted thought
From hues of nature's heaven was wrought,
And she of paradise the queen
Embodied what his soul had seen.

And could that bard, whose mind was free
And boundless as eternity;
Who seem'd on earth to have the skies
Aye floating o'er his mental eyes;

To the low dust of life descend,
And with the base its glory blend?—
How nobly hath awarding time
For genius shaped the crown sublime,
And silenced in oblivion's shade
The war opinion's fury made!—
Till all the wounds and stabs of strife
That agonized his bleeding life
Appear but like a mould'ring stain
That lingers on some marble fane,
But, ere it rots one tint away,
Hath vanish'd in some heavenly ray!

Oh! many are the pangs that wear
A spirit into proud despair;
And many are the tears that flow,
To swell the tide of human woe:
But seldom doth the sicken'd heart
From dreams of false perfection start
With pangs of such convulsive power
As when the great have ceased to tower,

Desert the sky, and chain their wings,
To strive with earth's degraded things;—
Like eagles, when their flight is o'er,
That wrangle on some weedy shore!—

But one amid the bardic throng
To whom the wreaths of heaven belong,
From pride and coarser impulse free
Stands out, in solemn purity!—
His heart, by woman's power array'd,
The summons of high love obey'd,
And beautiful, beyond the light
Of language to reveal aright,
The passion of a deathless pair,
Who breath'd on earth celestial air!—
Before the dawn of being came
They dreamt their lot was doom'd the same,
That human love in heaven would be
A wedded immortality!
And, when his dying Meta lay,
And felt her spirit faint away,—

Like music from a falt'ring wave,
When sinking to its ocean grave,—
Beside her Klopstock meekly stood,
And watch'd the pale and speaking blood
In awful changes come and go!—
But never was such loving woe,
When Meta—to his fond request,
That round him her bright wings should rest
While o'er the world his fate must rove,—
Responded with a burst of love,
"Who would not share that lot divine,
To be thine angel!—thou wert mine!"—

A gentle stream that glides along,
And frames the breeze a lovely song,
And that same stream, when torn at length,
And arm'd with desolating strength,
As down some rocky steep it pours
And like a rival ocean roars,—
May typify the tranquil soul,
When calm'd by virtue's wise control,

And one by passion's whirlwind force
Compell'd to each disastrous course:—
'Tis thus, when sad-eyed mem'ry turns
From Klopstock to impassion'd Burns,
Two streams of life at once appear,
In mild repose and mad career.

The Shakspeare of the woods and fields,—
How wizard-like the sway he wields!
The heart-blood owns his lyric might,
And ripples with confess'd delight,
When Scottish valour fires the song,—
Like clarion music, stern and strong!
Excitement,—that immortal pain,
The demon of a poet's brain,—
On him it wreak'd its wildest rage!
And all that poverty could wage
Against a high and haughty mind
His trampled heart was doom'd to find.
Yet, cradled in dark Mis'ry's bed,
How nobly was his genius led!—

What man denied, great Nature gave:
His soul, no educated slave,
The elements and seasons taught;
Creation magnified his thought;
And when amid the foliage dim
The blackbird piped his vesper-hymn,
Or round him like a lustrous pall
He felt the day's bright curtain fall,
As tides th' attractive moon obey,
So throbb'd his pulse to Nature's play.—
And woman by her smile could throw
A sunbeam o'er his blackest woe,—
A ray whose beauty reach'd the soul,
And bade his burning numbers roll!

Yet who can read the bitter fate,
So darkly chill and desolate,
That wrapt in clouds the closing day
Of him who pour'd as proud a lay
As ever rose from Scottish lyre
On inspiration's breath of fire!—

Nor weep to think that starless night
Should blacken round that soul of light!
Oh! who can mark his mind's undress, [13]
The agony of lone distress,
The curse of want that crush'd his brain
To frenzy—with a fiercer pain!—
Can hear the groan of anguish'd hours,
When Misery rallied all her powers,
And thoughts like hidden scorpions tore
The mind that could no longer soar,
But prostrate in its ruin lay
A blasted wreck and bleeding prey!—
Nor ask for Pity's brightest tear
To tremble on his early bier!—
Yet, warmly while around him shone
The worship that his genius won,
Prophetic truth beheld afar
The clouds that would conceal his star,
And leave him, long ere life should close,
To wither in degrading woes!

Yes; he whose lines are mottoes now,
Whose genius veils his country's brow
With glory, when his stirring lays
Are greeted with exalting praise,—
Was fated, like an outcast thing,
To moulder in dark suffering
Down to the grave!— with scarce a bed
To pillow his immortal head!

My God! how little can the great
Feel the dread curse of blighted fate;
Or think that they, whose spirits throw
Around the world a heav'nly glow,
Whose bright imaginations seem
The fragments of a seraph's dream,
Whose words imparadise their hours,
And freshen earth with Eden-flowers,—
The martyrs of the mind have been,
Or suffer'd more than eye hath seen!
And, while the theme of Glory's tongue,
Their homes were wreck'd, their hearts were wrung;

And songs that flow'd so gaily free
Gush'd from a fount of misery!

A noble mind in sad decay,
When baffled hope hath died away,
And life becomes one long distress,
In bleak and barren loneliness,—
Methinks 'tis like a ship on shore,
That once defied th' Atlantic roar,
And gallantly through gale and storm
Hath ventured her majestic form,
But now in stranded ruin laid,
By winds and dashing seas decay'd,—
Forgetful of her ocean reign,
Must crumble into earth again!

To crown the poet-throng appears
Another, whose poetic tears,
While a bruised spirit toils below,
Shall consecrate affection's woe;

And ever by their passion tell
The power of love's unfading spell,
That beautified with lone despair
The visions that his lines declare.

The anguish of his clouded heart
Hath ceased on earth to play its part,
And o'er his laurel-shaded brow
The damp of death lies coldly now!
The storm, the shadow, and the strife,
That made and magnified his life,
Have sunk like winds along the deep,
And left him to untroubled sleep!
But few, when Harold died, forget
The fulness of our fond regret,
As England echoed back the knell
That toll'd from Greece his last farewell!
Oh! nought but some ignoble breast,
Where feelings iced in stony rest
Can baffle with a stern disdain
The lightnings of each lofty strain,—

That did not unto tears admire
The dirges of his gloomy lyre,
And speculate, if years had brought
A blessed store of brighter thought,
How much of all that mars his fame
Had vanish'd in a purer aim,—
The earthquake that so rock'd his soul
With dread and undefined control,
Beneath some intellectual balm
Had soften'd to melodious calm:
Those feelings that were prompt to stray
Where all the weeds of vileness lay,—
To linger with sarcastic stress
Round nature's erring littleness,
As though in man no trait was true
But that which wore the meanest hue,
And goodness were a dream that dies
When dazzled by a poet's eyes,—
Ay, feelings dark as these, perchance
Had glorified by pure advance

The regions of exalted mind,
And loved the links of human kind.—
The spots upon Creation seen,
For sorrow, not for scorn, had been;
Till genius, from its darkness free,
Flash'd out in full divinity!—

But, 'twas not so; and man must wait
The brightness of a better fate,
To tell him all that grief would learn,
When back to dust the great return,
E'en in that hour when most they seem
To realize our vastest dream,
And purify the hopes of Earth
With promise of a second birth!—

The sanctity of Virtue stands
Above the soil of human hands,
And genius, though the world it awe,
Must bow to her corrective law:

Yet who, unless the mind can be
Transform'd to perfect deity,
Can judge how terrible the sway
When impulse leads the soul astray?
The meanest tongue can brand a sin,
But who can probe the heart within,—
The gloom of agonizing strife,
When principle resigns its life,
Till passion in its fiery reign
Pours madness over blood and brain!—
A soul that like Æolian lyre,
Which faintest tones of air inspire—
Was thrill'd by sound, and hue, and scene,
As though a slumber ne'er had been;
A spirit pining for the good,
Till dreams became its daily food;
Or, revelling in satiric gloom
That mock'd at all above the tomb,—
Oh! these unite to arm a spell,
That few below have wielded well!

And, blended with a slakeless thirst
To find the spot by crime uncursed,
In Byron lived a haunting dread,
From moods of dark enquiry bred,—
Of that UNKNOWN beyond the grave,
Where fancy's wings delight to wave:—
Hence, doubt and scorn, with mis'ry rife,
Threw blackness on the stream of life;
Till o'er each maze of erring man
The reckless eye of satire ran,
And, finding nought but error free,
Call'd vice the sole reality.

But, where the grave of Harold lies,
May Virtue bend forgiving eyes!
The meek, whose time-worn spirits know
How much that heart must brave below,
Which battles with the mystic gloom
That haunts it from the spectral tomb,—
No vengeance on his glory wreak,
But lightly of each error speak.

For who are they, if life had been,
Like Byron's, one uncurtain'd scene
Where every eye could point a gaze,
And level all its envious rays,—
Whose splendour would reveal no blot
That now lies faded and forgot?—
While some regard with bitter eyes
The tomb where buried genius lies,
And bid the gates of Mercy close
On them whom earth denied repose,—
The hearts whom wisdom's humbling power
Hath taught to fear their firmest hour,
In tender awe will bend and weep
Where Byron's noble ashes sleep,
Nor love, o'er sorrow's wildering track,
To trace the foot of error back;
But thank him with a proud excess
For all the poet's mightiness!—
Oh! there he lies! becalm'd in death,
Whose being was a tortured breath;

Whose years in whirlwind bore him on
To the dread gulph where time is gone!
And, stirless as the travell'd lake
Whose waters down the mountain break,
O'er wood and wild, and ridge and rock,
Convulsed and crash'd with many a shock,
The turbulence of trial now!—
Let God alone the rest avow.

And was it nought to melt away
The frost that bound the spirit's play?
To summon into startling view
The deep, the daring, and the true,—
Or light the chaos of the soul,
And see its cavern'd waters roll!—
Instead of polish'd rhyme, to raise
The stormy breath of wilder lays;
Or make us, in his milder hour,
Dissolve in dreams of beauty's power—
Such beauty as our thoughts create,
But never clad a mortal state!

There are who call the poet's bliss
Too airy for a world like this :—
Alas! for wisdom, if her voice
Can teach the heart no glorious choice;
If downward to the dust she try
For aye to fix our slavish eye,
And seldom bid one glance be given
Aloft to mind's unclouded heaven!—
The freshness of poetic thought,
From out the groves of fancy brought,
And wafted o'er the soul's domain,—
What is it but a breezy strain
From winds of vanish'd Eden lent
To purify earth's element,
And summon forth those dream-born flowers
That grew in Milton's epic bowers!—
'Mid all the waste of worldly arts,
Oh! leave him yet some few fine hearts,
That still the poet's wand may raise
A vision of unfallen days,

And rescue from the fangs of time
Some feelings that are yet sublime!

On Harrow, when the heaven of June
Was garmented with glowing noon,
And not a cloud's minutest braid
Along its liquid sapphire stray'd,
I stood beneath that haunted tree,
And heard the leaf-toned melody
Which oft in boyhood's dreaming years
Had warbled on the pensive ears
Of Byron,—when he loved to muse
Beneath the quiet churchyard yews.
O! who in such an hour could stand,
And look adown the sloping land,
Where meadow, vale, and roving stream,
So often charm'd his chequer'd dream;
And round him feel the fresh-wing'd air
That lifted oft his waving hair;
And press the same sepulchral stone
His pressure loved to make its own,—

Nor feel a sense of fame and might,
That shook the heart with strange delight!

'Twas here he feasted fancy's power,
And in the mind's prophetic hour
Would try with telescopic gaze
To read the brow of unborn days,
Hail the bright orb of future fame,
And glory in a minstrel's name!
Or dared with dreadless eye to see
A map of vision'd misery,
In lines of awful length outspread,—
Till darkness veil'd him with the dead!

And who with backward gaze can scan
The burning course his genius ran,
Nor feel how woman's reigning star
With fervid eye he view'd afar,
And felt her beam of beauty cast
A light that heaven alone surpass'd!—

His primal love — it never died,
But still within the soul supplied
The waters of affection pure,
From fate and freezing time secure;
'Twas thence ideal sorrow drew
The pangs that pierce our nature through,
Till love became the life of song:—
And glories to its gloom belong!
But had his heart with hers entwined,
Whose beauty struck his boyhood blind,
The starlight of whose cloudless eyes
Attracted his immortal sighs,—
If happiness can reach the great,
How bright had been his alter'd fate!
Instead of darkness, light would be
Around the soul's divinity!—
Medora, Kaled, and Gulnare,
Each ruin'd maid and reckless fair,—
Were moulded from the shades of mind
Despair and passion leave behind.

But once in home's attractive fane,
Oh! had he worshipp'd woman's reign,
And seen her — not in mock romance —
Through daily paths of life advance
As angel of domestic hours,
How nobly might those lofty powers
He lavish'd on a Corsair's bride
Have been to purer love supplied!
While, feeling all that fancy drew,
His genius would have brighten'd too,
And woman in his picture hail'd
A model that had never fail'd,
While love, by genius made divine,
Could sanctify a poet's line! —

And such hath been fond woman's sway
Since angels hymn'd her natal day,—
The passion of profoundest love
Whose archetype is God above! —
And while yon heaven is o'er us hung,
For ever shall the brave and young,

The free — the fervid — fond and true,
Declare what female hearts can do!

And many a name as yet unknown,
Embalm'd in some immortal tone
Of genius by a thrilling bard,—
Shall time exult to read and guard:
And beauty, in domestic bowers
Now fameless as secluded flowers,
When buried queens forgotten lie,
And royal tombs can raise no sigh,—
In melody of deathless might
Shall live to be the world's delight,
While love and poetry can claim
To twine a wreath round Woman's name!

CANTO THIRD.

—— The mild majesty of private life.

AKENSIDE.

—— Show us how divine a thing
A Woman may be made.

WORDSWORTH.

WOMAN,

THE ANGEL OF LIFE.

CANTO THIRD.

ANGEL of life! whose love hath been
The master charm of time and scene,
Romance, in her elysian mood
Creating forms of fair and good,
Hath not outsoar'd thy virtue's height;
Nor imaged forth more purely bright
The lineaments of perfect grace
Than yet adorn thy breathing race:
And Fiction, when her mould was cast,
Might gaze on life, and feel surpass'd!

But where is woman most array'd
With all that mind would see display'd ?—
O, England ! round thy chainless isle
How fondly doth the Godhead smile,
And crowd within thy little spot
A universe of glorious lot !
But never till the wind-rock'd sea
Have borne us far from home and thee,
The patriotic fervours rise,
To hallow thy forsaken skies !
Though Nature, with sublimer stress,
Hath stamp'd her seal of loveliness
On climes of more colossal mould,—
How much that travell'd eyes behold
Would sated wonder throw away,
To take one look where England lay !—
To wander down some hawthorn lane,
And drink the lark's delightful strain ;
Or, floating from a pastured dell
To hear the sheep's romantic bell,

While valeward as the hills retire
Peeps greyly forth the hamlet spire!
And all around it breathes a sense
Of weal, and worth, and competence.
But, far beyond all other dowers,
Thy daughters seem Earth's human flowers!—
The charm of young Castilian eyes,
When lovingly their lashes rise,
And, blended into one rich glance,
The lightnings of the soul advance!—
Wild hearts may into wonder melt,
And make expression's magic felt;
Or, girded by the dreams of old,
In Sappho's Lesbian isle, behold
A shadow of primeval grace
Yet floating o'er some classic face:
But where, in what imperial land,
Hath nature with more faultless hand
Embodied all that beauty shows—
Than round us daily lives and glows?

Here, mingled with the outward might
Of charms that coldest gaze invite,
Th' enamel of the mind appears,
Undimm'd by woe, unsoil'd by years!—
To wedded hearts, devoid of strife,
Here home becomes the heaven of life;
And household virtues spring to birth
Beside the love-frequented hearth,
While feelings, soft as angels know,
Around them freshly twine and grow!

A landscape of domestic love,
Which God's paternal eyes approve,
Reflected from a homely dream,
'Shall form my lay's concluding theme;
If there one heart its home can see,—
'Twill render more than fame to me!

A vale of beauty!—lo! the morn,
In clouds of crimson radiance born,

Hath risen from the couch of night,
And fills the air with fresh delight;
While hues, like harmonies that range
The world of sound with lovely change,—
In varied lustre o'er the sky
Awaken, mingle, melt, and die;
Till full-orb'd on his flaming throne
The Sun-king is beheld alone!
And, blue as Baltic waves asleep,
Before him lies a dazzling sweep
Of azure, in its deep excess
Of morn-created loveliness!—

How exquisite this breathing hour!—
As though awhile some choral bower,
Where cherubim partake repose,
Its crystal gates did half unclose,
Till fragments of delicious sound
Came wafted on the winds around,
And bloom and balm to nature giv'n
Made earth a momentary heaven!—

Hark! to the choir of yonder wood,
Where life exults in solitude:
On each unrifled bough is heard
The lay of some melodious bird;
And young-wing'd breezes as they float
From brook and meadow learn a note;
And streams like tides of gladness flow,
And in the air there dwells a glow
Of elemental youth and joy,
Unchill'd by one corrupt alloy.—
How dazzlingly with rosy dies
The fairies of the field arise!
And flutter on their insect wings,
As each a song of matin sings;
And where around the glitt'ring blade
A liquid web of dew is laid,
As early peasants' footsteps pass,—
How greenly shines the shaken grass!
While many a lark from out the ground
Is startled, like a magic sound

That ere the sense be half aware
Is kindled by the harp of air!

And list! from out yon village dell,
Upon the breeze, in broken swell,
The goings-on of life begin
To charm the ear with social din.
The creak of hill-ascending wain,
The shout of some exulting swain,
The watch-dog baying far behind,
The mill-sounds hoarse upon the wind,
With voices from the child or crone,—
Are all in gay confusion thrown!
And travel on the morning breeze
With notes whose human echoes please.
From the thatch'd chimney now have broke
The tinted wreaths of cottage smoke,—
Ascending delicately bright,
And braided by a golden light,
Like air-wing'd hopes they glide away,
Commingling with the boundless day!

And see, amid the straw-roof'd throng
Of homes that to yon dale belong,—
As dwelt the patriarch on the plain,
Surrounded by his pastoral train,—
A mansion smiles; whose neater state,
Though unallied to proud or great,
A central grace around it throws,
And o'er each cot a charm bestows.
Embower'd in laurels, green and calm,—
To view it yields the eye a balm!
But, when at eve its garden hath
A lustre on each lilied path;
When bough, and branch, and grape-hung vine,
In rays of pensive beauty shine,
While gladsome bee, and quiring bird,
And leafy song, are faintly heard,—
More lovely than a dream-built dome
Appears that hush'd and heavenly home!
There often hath the worldling cast
A longing eye, ere on he past,

And while it wander'd o'er the scene,
Mused—Oh! that such my own had been!—

But is it like gay hearts that hide,
With sunny brow, a bitter tide
Of anguish in their gloom below,
Which they who suffer only know?—
Have venom'd passions, fiercely wild,
The pureness of its peace defiled,
While outwardly its walls declare
That all within is tranquil there?—
No! war and famine, blood and crime,
Have stain'd the ghastly scroll of time,
And tears, the rain of torture, flow'd,
And conscience borne its burning load,—
While twenty years o'er earth have roll'd,
The aged died, and youth grown old,—
Yet still, in unalloy'd content
Remains that blissful tenement!
And, save the shadows that o'ersteal
The brightest fate the good can feel,

Around its heaven-protected scene
One summer of the soul hath been!
And like a fount whose waters fling
A freshness with faint murmuring,
Perceived alone by desert flowers
That bud beneath its nursing powers,—
From thence hath Charity's sweet store
Been scatter'd for the sick and poor.
So noiseless were the feet that trod
Those lovely paths which lead to God,
That angels only heard their tread,
And track'd them to some dying bed!—

But where yon ivy gate expands,
Within it what a vision stands!—
More exquisite in brow and limb
Than those aërial cherubim,
Which Painting in some starry dress
Reveals on clouds of loveliness!
Around her, like a viewless zone,
A fascinating might is thrown:

Her brow is pure as thought can be,
And whiter than the foam-clad sea,
Expanded with an arch of grace,
Like heaven's, above a heavenly face;
And on that polish'd cheek, behold!
Her ringlets, by the breeze unroll'd,—
In gleaming motion dance and shake,
Like ripples on a restless lake!
Her years are on the verge of heaven,—
That period when to life is given
The freshness of elastic youth,
Yet touch'd with woman's deeper truth:—
Again, behold that virgin face!
'Tis beauty in the mould of grace;
Incarnate soul lies sculptured there!—
A feeling so divinely fair
Is dwelling in those dark-fringed eyes,
That when they front the dazzling skies
Pure spirits well might deem that earth
Had copied some celestial birth,

Or beauty in the world had grown
All spirit-like, to match their own!

Yet innocence with homely seal
Hath stamp'd the power her looks reveal;
And should her form the rustic meet
Amid the pent and crowded street,
So artlessly each lovely hue
Would dawn on his delighted view,
At once his mental eye would roam
To scenery round a village home,
Till breeze and brook were heard again
Exulting o'er his native plain.

Companion of the morning hours,
To tend her own infantine flowers,
That grow beneath her guardian eyes,
And let their lids of bloom arise,—
The garden haunt she loves to pace:
And oft is seen, with bending grace,

And hand that scarcely wounds the air,
To nurse each bud unfolding there;
Till fancy, where her touch presides,
Might dream the soul of flowers abides,
That waft abroad their sweetest sigh
To greet her, as she glideth by!—
Before her nought is forced to flee:
All undisturb'd the rifling bee,
When hived in bloom, may hum and sip
A banquet off the rose's lip:
The butterflies, bright gems of air!
Can twinkle round her silken hair;
And not a bird that quells its song,
Or flutters when she moves along,
But sings as though a sunbeam came
Athwart the boughs with brighter aim!

'T was here amid this haunt of dreams
Her childhood roved, and still it seems
Alive with voices heard of yore,
And breathes of them who breathe no more!

From out her casement's vine-clad height
She views it, when the veil of night
Lies dimly woven over all,
Or glitters, like a dewy pall;
And here, when starry magic reigns
Amid the sky's untravell'd plains,
And moonlight with mysterious power
Hath mantled yonder grey church-tower;
The pensive maiden loves to stand,
And let her night-born dreams expand.—
Nor is the scene bereft of charm:
The dusky roof of distant farm,
The meadows in their dim array,
The frowning coppice far away,
And cot that shows its twinkling pane
Adown the lone and green-bough'd lane,
While yonder, where the cloven hill
Seems parted by a tempest's will,
The billows wreath'd with moonshine play
And warble forth an ocean lay,—

To hearts that feel the hush of night
Enchanting is their mingled sight!

A daughter, beautiful and good,
On the fair brink of womanhood,
When all the debt of love-watch'd years,
Of buried pangs and bosom'd fears,
By filial worth can be repaid,—
Is more than words have yet portray'd.
What links, which time nor death can part,
Have bound her to a parent's heart!—
Oh! deep beyond description lies,
Pure as the ray of seraph eyes,
The love within parental souls!
Whatever tide of anguish rolls,
Whatever wreck the world can make,—
Till God himself the good forsake,
Affection is the life of life,
A power with more than feeling rife,
Above all base dominion free,
A passion for eternity!

O blest! unutterably blest!
The visions to their fancy prest
When sire and mother blend a pray'r
For thee, thou spirit! fond as fair.
Thy being sways their mortal breath,
And shouldst thou die,—'twere more than death;
For in thy tomb their thoughts would dwell,
And darkness be their brightest spell!—
To think on all thine artless ways
Since childhood reap'd its golden days;
From year to year delighted trace
The magic dawn of mind and face;
To watch thee in life's daily round
With ev'ry trait of heaven abound;
And when some friend, whom time endears,
Hath warbled in their tranced ears
Of noble acts in secret done,
And wreaths by silent virtue won,—
Oh! then around their hearts to feel
A glow of admiration steal!—

Or haply, with prophetic truth,
To picture for thy wedded youth
A soul that shall be worthy thine,
With feelings from as pure a mine;
And when the churchyard yews shall wave
And darken o'er their cherish'd grave,
To feel, whatever time decree,
One Heaven their final home will be!—
A bliss so pure no words unfold,
A joy so deep no eyes behold;
That language must be born above
Whose power reveals a parent's love!

And thou art worthy, on whose brow
The stainless mind lies mirror'd now,
Around their guardian hearts to twine
Those feelings that are so divine!
No wish, or want, or hope, or joy,
No dreams of time thy youth employ,—
But blended with their meaning lies
Approval shed from parent eyes.

And, as a ray from out the sun
Reveals its birth where'er it run,
Thy virgin thoughts, howe'er they stroll,
Retain the brightness of the soul!
And often in thy sleep is heard
The fragment of some duteous word,
When lips of imaged parents seem
To bless thee in thy girlish dream!—
How winning are those myriad ways
By which a child fond homage pays,—
Those ministries of heart and hand
Which none but parents understand!—
When morning reigns in dewy power,
To hie and cull the choicest flower;
Or pluck the fruit whose bloom appears
Bedeck'd with night's refreshing tears;
Or else with magic pencil take
The likeness of some hill or lake,—
Some haunted spot, whose beauty hung
Rich praises on her feeling tongue,—

And these to place in proud surprise
Before a mother's greeting eyes!—
Affection, let thy voice declare
How tender sweet such trifles are!
For what is kindness, but the heart
In action, without guile or art,
Imparting by some nameless power
A bloom to each attractive hour?

But, when bleak winter bares the earth,
And Comfort hails the wonted hearth,
Then, child of beauty! thou art found
The central star of bliss around.
Some book divine, or antique tale,
Or shipwreck, where the savage gale
Cries havoc! o'er a howling sea,—
Perchance, the chosen page may be:
Or bard eterne, with visions bright
Shall charm the soul of taste to-night;
Or, haply, Music's heaven-born spell,
Whose spirit thou canst wake so well!

Shall kindle for paternal ears
The faded tones of former years;
Oh! then adown the tides of song
While thou enrapt art borne along,
Till the bright chamber seems to glow
With Melody's fine overflow!
And, full before his bickering fire,
Delighted sits a dreaming sire,—
Forgive the mother, if her gaze
Be fill'd with more than fondest praise,
And Nature whisper through the heart,—
"My child! how exquisite thou art!"

But, 'tis not in the noon of joy,
When life endures no stern alloy,
A daughter from her mind can pour
Divine affection's deepest store:—
Oh! let but once a pang prevail,
A limb be rack'd, or cheek grow pale;
Let the wild torture of disease
Deny to heart and head their ease;

Let Sorrow once her frown impress
On life's uncertain happiness,—
Then, scorner of the sex! advance,
And learn the power of Pity's glance,
The tender might of woman's gaze,
Unweaken'd by tormented days!—
Through hours of blackness, when the mind
Seems prostrate, wreck'd, and unresign'd,
How potent is her pleading eye,
How suasive her devoted sigh!—
One look does more than man could say,
And each word wafts a pang away!

And there are ties whose thrilling truth
Pervade her uncorrupted youth
With energies that breathe and move
In daily acts of duteous love,—
Behold yon sister!—fairy thing,
Whose forehead, like the brow of Spring,
Is ever bright and ever young,
And with the glow of gladness hung;—

So light in form, a breeze of life
Secure from earth's contagious strife,
Round her own orb of home and glee
On wing'd delight she seems to flee!
Each pulse within the fine-wrought frame
Is tuned to joy's unsleeping claim;—
Whether a cloud-isle richly drest
Her wonder-beaming eye arrest,
Or magic from some household word
Young laughter into life hath stirr'd.—
And dear as Nature's dearest tie
She grows beneath a sister's eye,
Who watches with a starlike gaze
Around her pure but perill'd days!
And rather than the air might press
Too bleakly on her loveliness,
Or pain one fleeting pang awake,—
Would let the blood her heart forsake,
And drop by drop dissolve away,
To win her life one pangless day!

And what, though years now intervene
To veil her own from childhood's scene,—
To robe an infant's face with smiles,
And summon forth its mimic wiles,
As playmate, she can stoop to be
Transformed to frolic infancy!—
Will echo back the bird-like sound
Of tiny laughs in merry round,
Nor coldly shun the meanest toy
That wings a moment's flight with joy.
And well those cherub features play
In answer to her sister's sway,—
Delighted, calm, or grief-array'd,
According as her words display'd
The tones that govern smiles and tears!
And often when some cloud appears,
By pain, or temper's gloom begot,
To shadow her infantine lot,—
That sister can alone restore
The sunshine as it play'd before!

And, duly as the car of night
Returns, she bends with soft delight
Enamour'd o'er the precious sleep
Of lids too beautiful to weep!
No! never is the pillow prest
Before a parting gaze hath blest
That winning face!— so brightly warm,
So tinted with the rosy charm
Of slumber, that its beauty seems
The bloom of amaranthine dreams!

But, ah! there is a dearer task,
Whose toils a patient wisdom ask;
And who beyond a sister knows
Where best the germ of knowledge grows,
When Infancy begins to look
Abroad o'er earth's unwritten book,
To read the world with curious eye,
And question truths beyond the sky!—
Fondly to aid the budding mind,
When thought springs faint and undefined;

To teach her lips a word to frame,
And prattle with some homely name;
Then, day by day, as reason wakes,
And mental twilight dimly breaks,
A delicate enchantment throw
Round each young truth the heart would know,
Thus nursing with a sweet controul
The childhood of a cherish'd soul,—
Oh! none but she can paint the joy
Of such divine and dear employ!
On angel wings thus years will speed,
And still in language, look, and deed,
Will sisterly affection be
A shadow of divinity!—
So purely will its magic wind
Around an infant's guarded mind.—

A brother,—oh! that thrilling name,
It vibrates through thy very frame,
Thou queen of boyhood's cloudless day!
In studious bower though far away,—

Thy heart is haunted with a sense
Of all a brother's charms dispense:
His picture on thy bed-room wall,
How frequently its lines recall
Th' imperial face, the manly brow,
The eyes that dared the soul avow,
The smile that knew no mean eclipse,
But ever round those graceful lips
In brightest welcome play'd for thee,
In moods of unaffected glee!—
What tales of prowess, feats of mind,
Around thy memory intertwined,
'Tis pure delight oft to unroll
In tones that touch a parent's soul!
Beside her, like a felt unseen,
The shadow of his shape hath been,
Whene'er along some favour'd walk
Her spirit dreams him smile and talk;
His voice is woven in the breeze
That carols round the garden trees;

And fancy, when the moon gleams bright,
Can often on its mirror write
Emotions 'twas divine to share,
When *both* had fix'd their glances there!—
Through weal and woe, through cloud and change,
Whatever clime or shore he range,
Till nature can her God deny,
Undimm'd will shine affection's eye,
And stainless those deep waters prove
That well from out a sister's love!

And think'st thou, though thy smile afar
Hath vanish'd like a fairy star,
Companion of her girlish lot!
That thou art in thy home forgot,
Where memories, like pulses, play
Within the heart of each new day:—
So long our early feelings last,
Affection owns no faded past!
For aye the glow of what was dear
Surrounds it like an atmosphere;

Eternal is the youth of thought,
Whatever outward change hath wrought,
And distance, though like death it seems,—
Is conquer'd by creative dreams
Of fondness, acting o'er again
The brother in his spirit's reign!—
For all he fancied, felt, or did,
Her mem'ry in fond silence hid,
And nought is trivial, wreck'd, or gone,
He cherish'd, loved, or gazed upon!—
Like gems of earth his flowers abide,
With dew and tender rain supplied;
His birds are fed with fost'ring care,
His dog beneath the wonted chair
In unalarm'd repose may lie,
And fawn to win her playful eye;
The glossy steed, whose bounding limb
O'er hill and mead hath toil'd for him,—
Beside him she will often stand
With greeting voice and gentle hand:

The page he read grows doubly sweet,
For there communing thoughts can meet!
Those melodies, whose dewy sway
Could best dissolve his soul away,—
Delightful 'tis again to pour
Around the room their richest store
Of melting sounds, that, ere they die,
Seem blended with a brother's sigh!—
But holier far is mem'ry made,
And deeper is its might display'd,
Whene'er the poor he loved to feed,
The hearts he caused no more to bleed,—
She welcomes in some rustic cot,
And finds his goodness unforgot!
And ye! whose locks with hoary truth
Betray the flight of faded youth;
Whose hands have rock'd the cradled boy,
Or ere he lisp'd his little joy,—
Full proudly may your tongues prevail!
For dear is each domestic tale

The homely past untreasures now
To brighten on a sister's brow!
But when arrives his well-known seal,
What ecstasy young eyes reveal!
Warm on the page her lips impress
A kiss of perfect happiness!
And well in that entrancing hour
When feelings claim prophetic power,
As all unworn his heart appears,—
A sister may outwing the years,
And vision round her brother's head
The rays of future glory spread!

And wouldst thou trace her secret tide
Of goodness to the poor supplied,
Winding unknown its village course
From charity's divinest source?—
Angelic woman! if to be
On earth a child of Deity,
Surpasseth all we deem renown,—
How peerless thine immortal crown!

For shipwreck'd hearts, sole haven, thou!
With pity on thy pensive brow,
And mercy in thy healing hand,
And voice beyond all music bland,—
From cot to cell, oh! thou hast been
Life's angel in its blackest scene;
And often with the dying good
On the bright verge of heaven hast stood!

And such thou art; and many a dame
Delights to hear thy darling name;
And many a tatter'd widow glows
To bless the hand that heal'd her woes:
While orphan babes in lane and street
With bright'ning face thy welcome meet:
And many a tale of mercy lives
The life that grateful memory gives,
When Feeling round a cottage fire
Can pay the debt thy deeds inspire!—
And they are such as cannot die,
Though honour'd by no human eye,

Unchronicled in rolls of worth,
Ungreeted by applauding earth,—
Silent and secret though they be,
Their tablet is eternity!
Where, graven by the Hand Divine,
The glories of the good will shine.

And thus in virgin solitude,
Unbroken by those waters rude
Of the rough world, whose waves afar
Scarce echo one tempestuous jar,—
Queen of the hamlet! years have flown
And still thou art unwooed and lone:
Yet time, with magic unconfess'd,
Has moulded feelings in thy breast,
That now like buried music float
With soft and secret under-note;—
So delicate, they scarce appear
To haunt thy spirit's maiden sphere,
But, waken'd once,—and they shall be
A soul within a soul to thee!—

Emotions of themselves afraid
A temple in thy heart have made,
Wherein they flutter, like a bird
That trembles when a voice is heard!—
And fancy loves a Being now
Whom shaping words cannot avow,—
A Form of fine imaginings
To which attracted nature clings.—
At length he comes! that nameless one,
The eye of dreams had gazed upon!
The magic and the mystery
Of life have now begun for thee,
And thou the type of heaven wilt prove
In primal, deep, and deathless love!

Emotion that is most sublime
Of all that hallows earth and time;
That principle from whence we draw
The light of each celestial law;
Pervading sense, preserving power,
Whom death nor darkness can devour;

An omnipresent might and spell
Wherein all mind and matter dwell,—
Is Love!—by that bright word alone
We vision forth The Vast Unknown!—
The Ruler of the seraphim,
Whose glory makes the glorious dim!
And not an element that glows
But breathes the life which love bestows.—
So magical its wide command,—
The sternest rock, the bleakest strand,
Around an exiled wretch hath thrown
A charm that paradise might own!
And who,—when form and face depart
That seldom touch'd his deeper heart,
Or, e'en in hours of marring strife
Profaned the pure serene of life,—
That feels not, while he says—"Farewell!"
A love-born sense within him dwell?—
A touch of heart, whose tenderness
Provokes him with a thrilling stress?

And hence the captive, when the light
Of freedom daunts his reeling sight,
With something of a mute regret,
His gaze on dungeon walls hath set,
Though misery's hand had graven there
The words and weakness of despair!—
There is but ONE who cannot love,
The anarch of the Thrones above;
Apostate, in whose sleepless eyes
A hell of burning hatred lies!
Whose torture is th' undying sense
Of unadored omnipotence;
A wither'd, dark, defeated Mind,
That curses Heaven, and scorns mankind!

And will the loveless, stern, or grave,
Think human fancies wildly rave,
When young affection's meteors play
In dazzling falsehood round their way?—
Oh! take him to some towering mind,
Whose Orphic words entrance mankind,

And, when the mask is laid aside,
And backward rolls the blood-warm tide
Of feelings, rich with early truth,
And vital with the flush of youth,—
How wither'd, wan, and leafless, grows
The laurel that renown bestows,
To that bright wreath affection wove
Round the fair brow of youthful love!—
That love, whose faintest impulse wrings
The bosom's agonized strings,
And even in its mildest reign
O'erpowers him with a yearning pain,—
A feeling that is unforgot,
That seems the core of life to rot,
And deaden it with slow decay,
As water frets the rock away!—
Thus passion forms the bane or bliss
Of being, in a world like this;
The day or night of inward joy,
Which years may dim, but not destroy.—

Love reigns but once,—yet that will be
Affection's true eternity!
All future love mere echo seems
Of vanish'd hope's melodious dreams;
A dying tone of lost delight,—
A fragment of those feelings bright
That once, when youth and heart were whole,
Created, form'd, and fill'd the soul!—

But, maiden! in thy vernal bloom,
On thee attends a calmer doom;
No clouds along thy placid heaven,
Like prophets, dark with hate, are driven;
No! all is open, bright, and blest:
And hopes may wander unreprest,
Like birds of beauty when they fly,
And wanton in their genial sky.
Oh! not for thee are voiceless fears,
The rack of unrelieving tears,
The agonies that coil and wind
In secret round a wasted mind,

Like vipers with envenom'd tooth,
To canker all the spirit's youth;—
Nor Circumstance, with eye averse
For thee hath framed a fearful curse!—
That long as life's dull waters roll,
With broken heart and blighted soul,
Thy feelings, on the rack of fate,
Shall live to mourn thy wedded state!—
Serene as thy soft brow appears
The countenance of coming Years:
Consenting parents' blended voice
Hath sanction'd love's ingenuous choice;—
And nought descends from dreams above
So exquisite as woman's love,
When passion in its virgin morn
Within a soul like thine is born!—
Her love by self is undefiled,
And foster'd like the spirit's child,
Adored and watch'd with heart and eyes!
To whom each thought would sacrifice,

Each hour devote its deepest care,
Each feeling give its fondest share;
And earth, and time, and joy, and youth,
From hence derive their only truth.—
Let *one* be lost—and dead would lie
The living world before her eye!
And thus, when savage years depart,
They leave no wreck, like woman's heart!
The ruin of her mind remains
Haunted by dim and dreary pains;
And pining thoughts each chamber throng
Where once arose the breath of song,
Till Sadness, link'd with cold despair,
Unites to fix its dwelling there!

With man's compare her feelings fine,
How delicate, how half divine!—
Torn by the slightest breeze of life,
And shatter'd by each varied strife,
When wrong, or woe, or accident,
Perturbs the spirit's element,—

In fragile bloom they seem to be
Like leaves on some majestic tree,
That often, when the boughs are still,
Regardless of the breeze's will,
Are shaken by a touch or tone,
And perish ere the blast hath blown!

But thou art loved—and unbetray'd;
And who can paint, enamour'd maid!
The paradise where dream and rove
Those moments dedicate to love?
For one there is, whose eye repays
The fervour of thy fondest gaze,
Whose language, with its melting tone
Of tenderness, can match thy own;
Whose visions of the beautiful,
When most his mellow'd heart they rule,—
Are woven out of thoughts of thee,
Like rainbows from a lovely sea!—

Has the world changed, more heavenly grown,
And ev'ry taint of darkness flown?—

That brightness is the sudden birth
Of feelings which ennoble earth,
Of passion in its stainless prime
Just risen on the brink of time!
By these transform'd,—creation glows
With each warm tint the mind bestows;
A deeper verdure decks the grass,
The clouds with richer glory pass,
The winds a sweeter welcome chant,
And, wheresoe'er her footsteps plant
Their printless beauty,—smile and sound
Of new enchantment hover round!
To her 'tis myst'ry;—but the mind,
Grown exquisite and o'er-refined,
Can veil the universe with light,
Till all is heaven that meets the sight,
And outward nature wears the dress
Of mind's internal loveliness.

Commingled souls!—'t were vain to tell,
Around them as rich evening fell,

And clouds of calmest beauty lay
Like dreams of air along the way,
Where wan and far th' horizon wound,
While nought but ocean breathed a sound,
How often on the placid shore
They rambled, till the light was o'er;—
What rapture on each radiant cheek,
While, softer than the billows speak
Responsive to the pleading wind,—
The murmur of each happy mind!
The waves beneath—the skies above—
All sights and sounds were born of love!
So all unstain'd by earth's alloy
Their very blood grew liquid joy;
So full their hearts, they fain would reel,
And make delight too deep to feel!—
Th' aroma of all mortal bliss
Enrich'd an hour divine as this;
Till soul-enrapt they seem'd to be
Attracted nearer deity;

While each to each immortal grew,
And saw the spirit beaming through
That glowing face, where love had given
The features that were form'd for heav'n !—

All hours are sweet, when love is there
A heavenliness to make and share;
All scenes delight, when eyes adored
The magic of their gaze afford;
No rock is bleak, no desert rude,
When Beauty walks the solitude ;—
But moonlight charms the outward eye,
Like music heard by memory ;
And temptingly the moonbeams play
Around young lovers' lonely way,
As though fond Nature glow'd to meet
The pressure of their timing feet !—
Belated, like a starry train
When loth to quit the azure plain,
Yon vision'd pair,—behold them now ;
While Dian bares her crested brow,

And clouds of alabaster white
Float in the soundless breath of night.—
How beautiful Creation's sleep!
So innocent, so calm, and deep:
The air is rock'd to voiceless rest,
The bird within his woven nest,
The dew upon unshaken leaves
A web of filmy lustre weaves,
And onward as the lovers steal,
You 'd deem the fairy ground could feel
Their shadows o'er its silence fall,—
So rapt a stillness veileth all!

But they have reach'd a woodland shore,
Where billows, now the breeze is o'er,
Are blended into one broad mass
Of heaving glory!—like a glass
Reflecting forth with twinkling change
The heaven-lights, in their lofty range.—
Magnificent, and mute, and bright,
To feel it,—is to worship night!

And there they stand, absorb'd and blest,
In adoration unexprest;
Yet, drinking in with eye and soul
Earth's beautiful and boundless whole!—
And when that tranced delight is o'er,
They glide along the glitt'ring shore;
Where tones of whisper'd feeling take
The heart from each!—as lips awake
In words which Love design'd to be
The heart's revealing masonry!—
A past, in its undying truth
Still vocal with the vows of youth;
A future, with each promise rife
Of tranquil home and wedded life,—
Of these they talk; and plan, and scheme,
Indulging hope's orac'lar dream:
So soft the hour, the future rolls
Obedient to prophetic souls,
By banks of bliss, and meads of flowers,
As though from wishes came the hours!

But night hath deepen'd :—now they roam
Enchanted to expecting home :
And, see ! where downward hills retire,
In dim repose, the village spire !
Around it smiles the yellow moon,
Gilding the leafy flush of June ;—
That home is reach'd, the room is gain'd,
With many a blush the walk explain'd,
Whose length 't was not for time to meet,
For what can weary lovers' feet !
And smiles on each parental face
Have risen with forgiving grace ;
And on the mother's brow is read
A tale that truth might thus have said—
" How often, when my age was thine,
Were walks as long and lonely mine !"

And say, can aught but death unbind
Affections round her soul entwined ?—
Though distance may bereave the eye,
And o'er him hang a stranger sky,

The sun that brings her spirit's day
Is born of his illuming sway!
The ground he trod a glory wears;
The twilight walk his step declares;
No melody so sweetly heard
As fancy's love-repeated word!
His picture on her heart portray'd,—
Soft mem'ry asks no other aid;
Bright o'er her face she oft can feel
His vision'd gaze of fondness steal!
The breathings of his soul begin
To thrill her echoing soul within;
And then, ere truth is half aware,
Her lips address the tongueless air
In words of unregarded tone,—
As sunlight on a rock is thrown
Where flower nor herbage, fruit nor stream,
Exult to drink the offer'd beam!—
Against him raise a sland'rous breath,—
And blooming looks the cheek of death,

Compared with that appall'd distress
That blights her features' loveliness!
Applaud him,—and the heart will rise,
Dissolved within her dewy eyes!
Lustrous, and fill'd with tearful light,
Like rain-beads when the moon is bright.
Voiceless her tongue, but what a glow
Of spirit's grateful overflow,
In eloquent excess appears
To glitter through those dawning tears!—
And, ah! forgive,—if fondly weak,
Too oft of *one* her soul will speak;
And faintly interweave his name
With hours when love should hide its claim:
For thus chance words will oft betray
How secret thoughts roam far away;
And hence, by soft and sudden tone,
The dreamings of the mind are shown,—
Like rays of beauty, when they dart
From out a cloud's divided heart,

And dazzle into gay surprise
The lids of unexpecting eyes.

Too much of pomp and aim is seen
Where'er the pen of man hath been;
But, lovely one!—how sweet for thee
Within thy haunted room to be,
And there to language yield thy mind,
As bends a flower before the wind!
And, aimless, save the soul to show,—
What magic will thy words bestow,
As bright they rush, with fondest speed,
To visit eyes which yearn to read
Each syllable that love can frame,
When hallow'd by so dear a name!—
Between its banks as roams the stream
And murmurs, like a liquid dream,
Surrender'd to the guiding force
Of nature in its beauteous course,—
So artlessly is woman's mind
To tones of untaught grace resign'd;

And wanders down the fairy tide
Of words, whose sweetness love supplied!

* * * * * *

Bells on the wind!—hark! peal on peal
Comes wafted with melodious zeal,
Making the morn, so bright and clear,
To thrill like joy's own atmosphere!—
A bird-song from each holly flows,
The bee hums loudly in the rose,
And like a soaring dew-drop seems
The butterfly to shed its gleams
Of hue and lustre, in wild play
Of rapture round its winged way.—
Creation, like a human soul,
Feels gladness through each fibre roll!

And, mark ye, where yon churchyard shows
The tombs' and turfs' sepulchral rows,
And sunbeams o'er the graves advance,
To touch them with as bright a glance

As once around each living head
The beauty of their joyance spread!—
A crowd of village forms attends;
There lip with lip loud welcome blends;
And homeward by a rose-strewn track
The gay-eyed young are wending back,
To drink around a festive board
Such healths as loving hearts afford.

But whence the joy?—behold yon room,
And there, in hymeneal bloom,
In robes like clouds of fleecy mould,
When round the moon their grace is roll'd,
Divine in youth's divinest hour,
With beauty for her matchless dower,—
The bride, the daughter, and the queen,
Whose virtues crowd our vision'd scene!

Poet and painter,—each may bring,
Fresh from the spirit's fountain-spring,

Full many a truth and many a tone
That Nature shall confess her own :—
But there, in that bright room, are met
Feelings which ne'er were mirror'd yet,
Save by the features, when they start
To life from out the living heart !—
The old, the tried, whose years retain
The light of early friendship's reign,
From childhood holding firm and deep
The faith unworldly bosoms keep ;
A sire, upon whose honour'd head
A silv'ry grace of time is spread,
Beholding, like a priest of joy,
The smiles which every face employ,
Though mellow'd is the meeker smile
That slumbers in his own the while,—
Again unite :—and she is there,
Whose heart becomes one voiceless prayer,
That life may round a daughter pour
Exhaustless mercy's heavenly store !

And thou! 'mid all, the bridal star,
Thy bosom is one tender war,
'Tween fond regret for faded hours,
And love, whose fullness overpowers!—
Deep tears within thy heart arise,
Though scarcely yet they dim thine eyes,
Lest shades of grief should haply fall
Upon thy wedding carnival,
And eyes parental catch from thee
A tear thy soul would shake to see!—
But, when the sad adieus are sigh'd,
Thy spirit to its core is tried,
As garden, ground, and village mead,
From the wing'd chariot fast recede:—
One look!—so long it seems to cling
Around the spot of life's dead spring!
One rapid glance at paths of yore,
Where roam'd the Days which breathe no more!—
And nature, wrung beyond control,
In tears will then unchain thy soul!

And let them fall! for tears like thine
Might hang on eyelids when divine;
And Love in their excess can see
How soft a woman's soul can be!

And she is gone! — the wedded maid,
Whose loveliness a home array'd
With lustre caught from every gaze!
Her look, her laugh, her winning ways,
How are they felt as unforgot
In each young scene and household spot!
Dismal the once glad room appears;
And eyes are charged with coming tears,
When haply to their pensive sight
Some little gift is brought to light,
Some token of departed hours,
For mem'ry left, like waning flowers!—
The fairy harp her fingers loved,
In tomb-like calm stands unremoved;
And o'er her pictured face is sigh'd
A deeper thought than words supplied,

When silent, sad, unwatch'd, and lone,
A mother lets her grief be shown!
Yon garden too, now reft and lorn,
Methinks its alter'd features mourn,
So droopingly the flowerets bend,
So dyingly their leaves depend!—
To what they were, when dew-bright dawn
Beheld her on the breathing lawn,
The goddess of the matin hour!
Arraying each expectant flower
With life and beauty; while the bird
Sang in the laurel-boughs unstirr'd,
And each mild breeze that caught her hair
Enamour'd hung, and nestled there!
Her sister,— she whose tiny feet
Were wing'd when *one* was there to meet!—
Now prattles in her dream and walk,
As though the lisping mind could talk
Of nothing, save that dearest one
Her bosom yearns to rest upon!

And many a home her hand relieved
For one so pure hath pined and grieved;
Whose presence to the cottage grew
Like heaven before a martyr's view!
So bright the change her blessing made
When sorrow had the soul betray'd.—

But what remains for minstrel's art?
Aught further can his page impart
Of feelings whose domestic sway
Conducts the hours of life away?
Then picture for thy pensive mood
A tranquil home in solitude;
And there, behold! the maid we drew
In Nature's soft but sterling hue!—
Those budding traits, when girlhood smiled,
Of heart and mind, which all beguiled,—
Expanded now to full-blown grace,
Have alter'd not with time and place:
Each added year has hail'd the birth
Of some new charm and noble worth;

And,— save that on her brow appears
A mellow tinge of matron years,
And in her eye serenely glows
The magic of the mind's repose,—
A girl in spirit still is left
Without one ray of youth bereft!

She is a mother! — what a bliss
Unbounded loads a name like this
With meaning, whose concenter'd might
Is mock'd by that mean word,—delight!
For sooner may cold earth describe
The glories of th' angelic tribe,
Than any, save a mother, tell
What mysteries in her being dwell.—
How spirit-fill'd her loving face!
How beautiful! thereon to trace
The imagery of rising thought,
By feeling's hidden sculpture wrought!—
When infant voices round her roll,
Like echoes of maternal soul,

And words like shatter'd music rise
Faint on her ear, in fond replies,
From lips that quiver, lisp, and play,
Like blossoms on a breezy day!—
But, ah! should malady destroy
Each fairy bud of infant joy,
And broken cries but half reveal
The buried pangs dark moments feel,—
What wrung despair in tragic stone,
What misery in marble shown,
In eloquence of grief can vie
With all that loads her living eye!—
When bending o'er a tortured child,
By fits 'tis fervent, sad, or wild,
And prompt, if pain might thus be quell'd,—
To drink the anguish she beheld
Into her soul, with one deep gaze!—
And bear it with immortal praise!

* * * * * *

Home of my fancy! fare thee well!
Unbroken be thy guardian spell;

Though not unmarr'd may be thy fate,—
Since darkness girds our brightest state,
And Life along her path of hours
With thorns hath intertwined the flowers;
Yet hearts where home and love unite
Share more than bleakest years can blight!
The sky may frown, the tempest fall,—
But woman can o'ercome them all!
While calm within affection's eyes
Endures that beaming paradise,
Where sorrow seeks a bright repose,
And basks beyond the reach of woes!

Land of my soul! maternal isle,
Array'd by Freedom's holy smile;
Whose throne is founded in the cause
Of native worth and noble laws;
Oh! long may Private Life be found
The glory of our English ground,
And woman on her stainless brow
Wear the bright soul we honour now!—

For though thy fleets o'erawed the main,
Till every billow felt thy reign,
And captive Empires drew the car
Of vict'ry from triumphant war,—
Thy strength is canker'd, if the core
Of private life be sound no more.—
Consumption on the cheek can bloom,
When beauty but declares a tomb,
And eyes their brightest meaning shed,
While every ray foretells the dead!
And thus may fatal glory be
An empire's garb of infamy,
If once that spring of manly pride,—
True gallantry,—be stain'd or dried;
Or, woman from her high domain
Must dwindle into meaner reign.

The grace, the lustre, and the glow,
Of what our softer moods bestow;
The hopes that keep the heart awake,
And self from out the selfish take;

The glory and the might of all
Domestic hours elysium call,—
Born of her magic, blend their sway
To charm the clouds of time away!
And if there be a home on earth,
Where nature most reveals its worth,
And Love his godhead can disclose
To feelings in their fond repose,
Till human hearts become divine,
Angel of Life! — that home is thine!

NOTES.

NOTES.

NOTE 1, PAGE 22.

Yon mountain's dim and dusky form,
Which, like a dying thunder-storm,
Glooms on the air with awful swell.

A rocky elevation, that seems to rise from the bosom of the sea (well-known to the mariners of the North) is here alluded to; it is termed the KOLL, whose aspect perpetually changes with the changing atmosphere.

NOTE 2, PAGE 23.

Grey Cronburgh lifts her storied pile,
And darkens o'er the Danish Isle.

The Castle of Cronenburgh, in the vicinity of Elsinore, was built by Frederick II. in the boldest style of Gothic architecture. Mr. Boeson, an honest old historian of the place, while describing the position, solidity, and magnificence,

of the castle, affirms that it may rank with the noblest castles, not only in the North but in all Europe.

This venerable edifice is connected with subjects of traditional, dramatic, and historical, interest. On descending into the casemates, the story of Holger Danske, (or Ogier the Dane, as he is called in the French romances), will amuse the mind in these damp and dismal vaults. It is thus related by Mr. Thiele:—"For many ages, the din of arms was now and then heard in the vaults beneath the Castle of Cronenburgh. No man knew the cause, and there was not in all the land a man bold enough to descend into the vaults. At last a slave, who had forfeited his life, was told that his crime should be forgiven if he could bring intelligence of what he found in the vaults. He went down, and came to a large iron door, which opened of itself when he knocked. He found himself in a deep vault. In the centre of the ceiling hung a lamp, which was nearly burnt out; and below stood a huge stone table, round which some steel-clad warriors sat resting their heads on their arms, which they had laid crossways. He who sat at the head of the table then rose up. It was Holger the Dane. But when he raised his head from the arms, the stone table burst right in twain, for his beard had grown through it. 'Give me thy hand,' said he to the slave. The slave durst not give him the hand, but put forth an iron bar, which Holger indented with his fingers. At last he let go his hold, muttering, 'It is well; I am glad that there are yet men in Denmark.'"

Leaving the casemates, and ascending the ramparts, Englishmen will find themselves on classic ground. Here they

may indulge the fancy of Mr. Matthison, the celebrated Swiss poet, who made the venerable ghost of Hamlet's father appear on the platform when he exclaimed:

> "There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio,
> Than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

But a still deeper tragedy will awaken the sympathies of an Englishman on his visit to Cronenburgh Castle. For, (to use the words of a distinguished author, already quoted), "here Matilda was confined, the victim of a foul and murderous court intrigue. Here, amid heart-breaking griefs, she found consolation in nursing her infant, when, by the interference of England, her own deliverance was obtained; and as the ship bore her away from a country where the venial indiscretions of youth and unsuspicious gaiety had been so cruelly punished, upon these towers she fixed her eyes, and stood upon the deck, obstinately gazing towards them till the last speck had disappeared."

During her imprisonment in the Castle of Cronenburgh, it was Queen Caroline Matilda's chief enjoyment to ascend the square tower, which commands one of the finest prospects in the world. No spot could better sooth the anguish of her mind. The animated appearance of the Sound, in which the English flag is so frequently displayed, would fill her mind with cheering images of the greatness and prosperity of her native land. And, in gazing on the beauties which nature has scattered with so lavish a hand over Denmark, her contemplations on the great First Cause of all good would create in her the best disposition to forgive her "enemies, persecutors, and slanderers."

NOTE 3, PAGE 25.

The victim of a royal hate.

"Sacrificed in the bloom of life, being born the 22nd of July, 1751, and married the first of October, 1766, she was first sent an inexperienced victim to a court, in which, surrounded with spies and emissaries, who interpreted the most trifling levities of youth into enormous crimes, the young and unsuspecting queen could not long remain without giving her enemies too favourable an opportunity to effect her fall. They succeeded; and induced the wretched king to become the engine of their malevolence, by signing the order for her imprisonment. The interposition of the British court saved her from farther violence, and conducted her to an asylum in the electoral dominions of Hanover. Here she appeared in her true and native character. Divested of the retinue and pomp which, on the throne of Denmark, veiled her in a great degree from the inspection of nice observers, the qualities of her heart displayed themselves in her little court at Zell, and gained her universal love. Her person was dignified and graceful: she excelled in all the exercises befitting her sex, birth, and station. She danced the finest minuet in the Danish court, and managed the horse with uncommon address and spirit. She had a taste in music, and devoted much of her time, while at Zell, to the harpsichord. The characteristic style of her dress was simplicity, not magnificence; that of her deportment, an affability which, in a personage of such high rank, might be termed extreme condescension. Her talents were liberal and diffusive, and, cultivated by reading,

displayed themselves on all occasions. She conversed with the most perfect facility in French, English, German, and Danish; and to those extraordinary attainments she added a thorough knowledge of the Italian, which she studied and admired for its beauty and delicacy. Her manners were the most polished, soft, and ingratiating; and even the contracted state of her finances could not restrain that princely munificence of temper, which made her purse ever open to distress or misery. Naturally cheerful and happy in her disposition, adored and beloved to the highest degree by the circle of her court, even the dark cloud of adversity could not alter the sweetness and serenity of her temper. Banished, with every circumstance of indignity, from the throne of Denmark, she yet retained no sentiment of revenge or resentment against the authors of her fall, or against the Danish people. Her heart was not tinctured with ambition; and she looked back to the diadem which had been torn from her brow with a calmness and superiority of soul which might have made a Charles the Fifth or a Victor Amadeus blush. It was not the crown she regretted; her children only employed her care; the feelings of the sovereign were absorbed in those of the mother; and, if she wept the day when she quitted the island of Zealand, it was because she was then bereft of those dear objects of her maternal fondness. Two or three months before her death, she shewed, with transports of joy, to Madame D'O——, her first lady of the bed-chamber, a little portrait of the prince-royal her son, which she had just received. It happened that this lady, some few days after, entered the queen's apartment at an unusual hour. She was surprised at hearing her majesty talk, though

quite alone. While she stood in this attitude of astonishment, unable to retire, the queen turned suddenly round, and addressing herself to her, with that charming smile which she alone could preserve at a moment when her heart was torn with the most acute and agonizing sensation,— 'What must you think, (said she), of a circumstance so extraordinary as that of hearing me talk, though you find me perfectly alone? But it was to this dear and cherished image I addressed my conversation; and what do you imagine I said to it? nearly the same verses which you sent not long ago to a child, sensible to the happiness of having found her father.' Madame d'O—— could not speak; she burst into tears, and, overcome with her own emotion, retired hastily from the royal presence."

NOTE 4, PAGE 26.

As, gazing from a rampart's height,
Her eye might gather free delight.

The note on Cronburgh Castle will explain the above allusion.

NOTE 5, PAGE 27.

Or musing saw in verdant rest
The garden once by Hamlet prest.

This is the spot which Danish tradition assigns for the scene where Hamlet was poisoned. Of the character of Hamlet, which has occasioned so much critical theory, Goethe (Meister's Apprenticeship, P. 4, C. 13) says:—

"It is clear to me that Shakspeare's intention was to exhibit the effects of a great action, imposed as a duty on a mind too feeble for its accomplishment. In this sense I find the character consistent throughout. Here is an oak-tree planted in a China vase, proper only to receive the most delicate flowers. The roots strike out, and the vessel flies to pieces. A pure, noble, highly moral, disposition, but without that energy of soul which constitutes the hero, sinks under a load which it can neither support nor resolve to abandon altogether."

Dr. Farmer, in his argumentative essay on the learning of Shakspeare, refers the origin of the plot in Hamlet, not to Saxo Grammaticus, but to the "Hystorie of Hamlet," from which he quotes the following applicable fragment:—

"It was not without cause and juste occasion that my gesture, countenance, and words, seeme to proceed from a madman, and that I desire to have all men esteeme me wholly deprived of sence and reasonable understanding; bycause I am well assured that he that hath made no conscience to kill his owne brother will not spare to saue himselfe, with the like crueltie, in the blood and flesh of the loyns of his brother: and therefore it is better for me to feigne madnesse then to use my right senses as Nature hath bestowed them upon me. The bright shining clearnes thereof I am forced to hide vnder this shadow of dissimulation, as the sun doth his beams vnder some great cloud when the wether in summer time ouercasteth; the face of a madman serveth to couer my gallant countenance, and the gestures of a fool are fit for me, to the end that, guiding myself wisely therein, I may preserue my

life for the Dane's * * * *. Neuerthelesse, I must stay the time, meanes, and occasion, lest, by making ouer great haste, I be now the cause of mine own sodaine ruine and overthrow; for, seeing by force that I cannot effect my desire, reason alloweth me, by dissimulation, subtiltie, and secret praises, to proceed therein."

NOTE 6, PAGE 62.

And, while they scorn'd a hero's crown,
To woman gave the heart's renown.

Il est une sorte de supériorité, que les femmes doivent conserver sur nous, et qui tient même à leur foiblesse, au respect qu' elles inspirent. Elle est plus facile à sentir qu' à exprimer. Il en est une autre qui tient à la dignité de l'homme, que non seulement sa compagne reconnoit, mais qu' elle ne lui pardonne même pas de lui sacrifier."— *Les Femmes*, by Segur.

The same author remarks elsewhere that — "if we review the conduct of women in every country, we shall be convinced that, without exercising any particular office, they have rendered as great a service as men."— As examples of great intrepidity, we may adduce the characters of Marguerite of Anjou, Marguerite of Bethune, (wife of the Duke of Rohan) Theresa, Countess of Montford, &c.

NOTE 7, PAGE 67.

Refinement's moral dawn awoke.

Dr. Miller (*History Philosophically Illustrated*, vol. 1, p. 17, 18) after alluding to the character of "the tribes of ancient Germany who acted a part so important in the modern

system," says that Tacitus, "disgusted with the vices of a decaying government, seems to have sought a refuge for his feelings in the contemplation of the uncorrupted simplicity of its barbarous neighbours, and to have described their manners with the same enthusiasm which is experienced by the inhabitant of a crowded city when he beholds freedom and nature in some rural retreat." Another distinguishing quality of the Germans was "*the reverence which they appear to have entertained for the female character*, neither degrading their women into slaves, like other barbarians, nor into objects of merely sensual gratification, like those who called themselves civilized. The German woman was the companion of her husband, participating his cares without servile drudgery, and influencing his actions with the gentle sway of respect and affection. The continence belonging to this character formed the most obvious contrast with the corrupted manners of the empire."

NOTE 8, PAGE 70.

Devotion in its grandest shape.

Vide Kenelm Digby's delightful work entitled THE BROAD STONE OF HONOUR, whose pages breathe the fine air of Chivalry, and whose examples of heroism conjoined with piety are exquisitely described.

NOTE 9, PAGE 71.

E'en there apostles might have known
A faith whose firmness match'd their own.

Even women amongst us have sustained the most cruel and

unrighteous suffering, and finished in patient faith their cause, and received, notwithstanding the weakness of their sex, the prize of Christian heroines.—*(St. Clement's Epist. to Corinth.)*

For a truly sublime instance of female magnanimity, read the account of the martyrdom of Blandina, as recorded by Eusebius.

NOTE 10, PAGE 72.

How much to female hands they owe
Their power to lessen human woe.

If it were only to please the imagination, the character of a devout lady is essential to complete the personages of the drama of the world. If the knights in the field were brave and faithful, the ladies in the castle gave alms to the poor, and prayed to God in their chapel. To go back still further, it was Placidia, daughter of Theodosius the great, whose influence upon Adolphus secured his favour to the Romans. It was Prisca and Valeria, empress and daughter of Diocletian, who protected the Christians of that era. It was Clotilda who converted Clovis, the king of France, to the Christian faith; it was the princess of Olga who introduced Christianity into Russia. The history of the middle ages, romances, family portraits, records of public foundations, every thing that is venerable in antiquity, are associated with the piety of our English ancestors. Eleonora commanded that there should be no other inscription on her tomb than this:

Eleonora, pauvre pécheresse.

The great Maria Theresa was in the habit of attending service daily in the church of the Capuchins, and of visiting

the vault which contains the coffins of her family. There is also at Vienna an institution, to which none but ladies of the highest nobility belong, for the purpose of superintending and promoting public charities. *In our United Kingdom, there is not one useful religious or charitable institution which does not derive support from the influence and munificence and even personal exertion of the female nobility.* Let us hope, then, that the successor of Mr. Gibbon may repeat his remark, that "Christianity must acknowledge important obligations to female devotion."

NOTE 11, PAGE 81.

The gloom of his remorseless fate.

The memory of his injuries pursued him into the immensity of eternal light; and in the company of saints and angels his unforgiving spirit darkens at the name of Florence.—(Hallam).

NOTE 12, PAGE 88.

When dark-eyed beauty rack'd and wrung
A heart round which the world had clung.

Shakspeare alludes to this unfortunate attachment in several of his sonnets.

NOTE 13, PAGE 104.

Oh! who can mark his mind's undress,
The agony of lone distress.

The dark bursts of pathos continually occurring in Burns's letters must be well known to all who have read his correspondence.

NOTE 14, PAGE 116.

And in the mind's prophetic hour
Would try with telescopic gaze
To read the brow of unborn days.

It has been said by the greatest of metaphysicians (Aristotle) that we all possess by nature a—"μαντευμα τι"—a kind of mental divination. In his letters, Lord Byron continually alludes to "a fear of what is to come, a doubt of what *is*, a retrospect of the past, leading to a prognostication of the future." In one of his darkest moods he writes:—"My friends fall around me, and I shall be left a lonely tree before I am nipped. Other men can always take repose in their families. I have no resource but my own reflections, and they present no prospect here or hereafter, except the selfish satisfaction of surviving my betters. I am indeed very wretched. My days are listless, and my nights restless. I have very seldom any society, and when I have I run out of it. I don't know that I sha'n't end it with insanity."

How often must his bruised heart have translated that saddest of all sentences!—

"Μη φυναι—τον απαντα νικᾳ λογον!"

That NOT TO BE, alone is bliss!

THE END.

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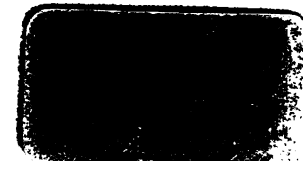
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